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OAKFIELD;

OR,

FELLOWSHIP IN THE EAST.

BY

W. D. ARNOLD,
LIEUT. FIFTY-EIGHTH REGIMENT, B. N. I.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
M DCCC LV.

CAMBRIDGE:
METCALF AND COMPANY, PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

"Tell me not in mournful numbers
Life is but an empty dream!
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

"Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

"Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act that each to-morrow
Finds us farther than to-day."

LONGFELLOW.

"He within,
Took measure of his soul, and knew its strength,
And by that silent knowledge day by day
Was calmed, ennobled, comforted, sustained."

MYCERINUS.

TO

A. P. AND A. B. J.

My dear Friends:—

You will be surprised to see *Oakfield* appear at last; under different circumstances indeed, and in a somewhat different form, from that which we first intended, but still, with some few alterations, the same as you remember it. I say which *we* intended, for I cannot forget the share which you have all along had in its composition and subsequent adventures: nor can I forbear to thank you, though unable at present to do so by name, lest I should compromise you as well as myself, for the kind sympathy and friendly (I fear too friendly) criticism with which you have throughout assisted and encouraged me.

Reading over these pages at a considerable interval after they were written, I become painfully conscious of the numerous faults and still more numerous deficiencies existing in them. By faults, I mean positive mistakes, which, however clearly seen, I could not alter without rewriting the whole;

by deficiencies, short-comings as to the idea which I proposed to myself. It became a question, therefore, (I being unwilling, as who is not? to undertake the grievous and most irksome labor of rewriting,) whether the book should be published as it was, or not at all, and I am willing to derive all the excuse I can from the partiality of kind counsellors for having chosen the former alternative. Still the responsibility must of course ultimately rest with me, as upon me the painful consequences of failure, of a disapproving, or, what is harder still, they say, for a young author to bear, a contemptuous, indifferent reception, must descend. Should this be so, however, I shall still have had my reward. This I can truly say: that no mortification will ever make the thought and recollection of *Oakfield* distasteful to me, associated as it is with you two, and so many of my pleasantest hours spent in your society in India.

I need not tell you, but it may be necessary through you to assure the reader, that there is nothing throughout the book intended for a personal allusion. Cade and Stafford have no more actual existence than the 81st and 90th regiments of Native Infantry: nothing could have been more unjustifiable, nothing certainly was farther from my thoughts and intentions, than to write at any corps or individual under a fictitious name. A class of men of whom Cade is a fair type, phases of an Anglo-Indian society like the 81st regiment, I have certainly seen too frequently; but nobody is *meant* by the one, no corps hinted at in the other.

The description of Indian every-day life may not be very

inviting, but I think the Indian reader will allow it to be, and the English reader on his testimony receive it as being, tolerably correct.

India is more talked of in England just now than it has been, I suppose, since the days of Warren Hastings. The Manchester folks want cotton; and when cotton is wanted, England is ready to begin and consider its duty to India. A result to be welcomed thankfully, however attained; nor need we sneer at the means, we who have seen in so wonderful a manner how by these material wants and instincts, by cotton-fields here and gold-diggings there, the populations of the globe are healthfully interchanged; we, I say, shall do ill to sneer at means by which we have thus seen that God does govern the world.

But whatever the people of England may talk, or think, or do about India, whether they get their cotton from it or not, I know that all will still depend upon the Englishmen who are in India; and the most sanguine and the most conservative will hardly deny that reform is wanted *there*. They speak ignorantly who speak in sweeping disparagement of the two services; there is much of gallantry and patient endurance in the one, much intelligence and laborious energy in the other of them. But it cannot be denied that there is a want of earnestness, a want of moral tone, and, together with much superficial scepticism that would pass for freedom of thought, a want of liberality, greater than exists in corresponding classes of society at home. If this were not so, the greater part of *Oakfield* would be false;

it is because I believe it on the whole to be true, that I have, after all, determined to publish it.

Wishing that I may be as kindly understood by the reader as I have been, and I know always shall be, by you,

I remain,

Affectionately yours,

PUNJABEE.

August, 1853.

PREFACE

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

Since the first publication of this book, it has been my fortune to see and hear several criticisms of it, both of praise and blame. There is one of these which I feel bound to notice. It has been asserted, I must say to my no small surprise, that *Oakfield* is an attack upon that distinguished service to which I have the honor to belong; and furthermore, I have heard it said, that such an attack, if made at all, should not be anonymous. This is something more than a criticism; it is an accusation; and, as such, I am glad to have this opportunity of answering it.

In the first place, whatever sting there may have been in the word "anonymous" is drawn by the title-page of the present edition. I did not think it necessary to publish my name in the first instance, partly because, in the case of a work professing to be a novel, it seemed superfluous to do so; but still more because I did not wish that a name, for

the sake of which I have so frequently met with kindness, should be in any degree compromised by any performance of mine. But when once the charge "anonymous attack" has been so much as hinted at, this consideration must give place to the yet higher one of self-respect. This attack, then, if such it be, is, at any rate, no longer anonymous; but I deny that it is an attack at all, at least upon the Bengal army. I deny that the Cades and Staffords represent that army, as confidently as I affirm that they form therein a distinct, a disgraceful, though, I trust, a diminishing class. It is a libel upon the profession to say that a man who tries to expose its black sheep is, therefore, the accuser of the whole service. I repeat what I said before, — that I have not consciously alluded to any particular individual, or any particular regiment; but I know that every officer in the Bengal army who reads *Oakfield* will feel that he recognizes the class of character there delineated; and I believe also that a great many will feel, that to say, or write, or do anything which may help to display such characters in their true colors, is to be, not the calumniator, but the sincere friend of the army. Nor can it be considered presumption for any man to lend a hand to such a task. It is no very presumptuous flight into the region of high morality to express contempt for those gross and flagrant forms of stupid vice which have been utterly expelled from the society of English gentlemen at home, but which still linger, though I believe rapidly on the decline, in corresponding circles in India.

I have been told, however, that this class is the exception, not the rule. I know it: my business lay with the exception. It surely is superfluous to say that the class alluded to is absolutely distinct from that high and honorable body of Indian officers who have so justly won for the Indian army its great reputation. These will understand me, when I say, that whatever accusation may be contained in *Oakfield* is directed, not against our service, but against that wretched class of men who are its disgrace, and our common enemies; who regard our noble profession, not as furnishing a pledge and security for the honor of its members, but rather as affording a justification and excuse for license; who denounce uprightness as folly, gentlemanly principle as cant, and common decency as methodism.

Believing that such men exist in our ranks, and that with regard to them I have said nothing more than every honest man in the army will approve, I have no wish to conceal my name, conscious as I am that I could return to India to-morrow, and look my friends and brother officers in the face, and feel that I had in no way injured, but rather done them service.

Fox How, Ambleside,
May, 1854.

OAKFIELD,

OR

FELLOWSHIP IN THE EAST.

CHAPTER I.

. . . . . *τίνας*
χώρους ἀφίγμεθ' ἢ τίνων ἀνδρῶν πόλιν;
Soph. Œd. Col. 1, 2.

"So this is India!" exclaimed Oakfield, as the steamer glided round the point, disclosing all the wonders of Garden Reach and the City of Palaces. "This is certainly beautiful. I accept the omen. May all my hopes of India be as well satisfied as they are by the first view of its externals!"

"Amen," said Stanton, more sadly than hopefully. He had himself been in India ten years of his life; and, knowing how sadly flattering a specimen of its scenery Garden Reach was, thought sorrowfully of the dash which all his friend's hopes would soon have to endure.

"Stanton, you are intolerable; you never tell me that I am a fool in my anticipations, but you imply as much fifty times a day."

"Not that you are a fool," said Stanton; "but I hardly know what your anticipations are. You hope to like India of course? You would not have left Oxford if you had not expected to be happier elsewhere?"

"Happier! No, you are wrong there. Whatever motive I may have had for coming out, I never expected to be *happier* in any place in the world than at Oxford."

"Why leave it then?"

"Because I had a vague feeling that I was going to the devil there."

"Is the devil, think you, farther off in India?"

"I hope so," said Oakfield, seriously.

"Well, old fellow, you know best why you came out. I tell you candidly I can't comprehend it. I can understand a boy of sixteen being glad to get away from school, and rush to the gorgeous East to wear a red coat; but why you, at one-and-twenty, should have voluntarily abandoned a respectable university career to come to this wretched country, I cannot conceive."

"In the first place, in spite of your experience, I am disposed to hope that it is *not* a wretched country."

"Well; Heaven forbid I should endeavor to make you think so: you will soon judge for yourself; — here we are."

"Here we are! How strange! as if we had come to the end of a long walk, not from England to India." Meanwhile the steamer had come to anchor, and in a few minutes Oakfield and Stanton were on their way to Spence's Hotel, in palkis. Edward Oakfield had always looked forward to taking orders, had kept his terms at Christ Church and taken his degree, when he suddenly grew restless, urged his friends to get him an Indian appointment, and came out as a cadet. Stanton was a friend of six weeks' standing, an artillery officer, returning from furlough. On the voyage he and Oakfield had become intimate, and although the one was a griff and the other a comparative veteran, according to Anglo-Indian estimation, yet they themselves, looking upon things through other than Anglo-Indian media, found little difference of importance between twenty-one and thirty.

Stanton himself *liked* India about as much as most people who have been ten years in the country do like it; he was now returning to what his unpersuadable friends at home would call his magnificent service, his life of Oriental luxury, &c.; what he knew well enough to be an existence of uncomfortable banishment. He was not unhappy about it; he had got too much to regard it as a stern matter-of-course necessity; but still less was he happy, or in the least degree agreeably excited, at finding himself again in India. He felt, perhaps, a gloomy sort of satisfaction in returning to his duty, and in the very consciousness of his dislike for it found comfort. But far more than for himself he felt for his friend. He did not know, indeed, the exact cause of his having left Oxford, but he knew that he came to India in hope, and could not but fear that he would soon meet disappointment. Oakfield himself was neither happy nor unhappy, but anxious. India had come so little into his thoughts all his lifetime, he having never had a friend in the country, that he had no very decided expectations of any sort to be gratified or disappointed at first glance; he was going to make an experiment, and felt that it had not yet commenced. As for his profession, that also was a *terra incognita* to him, of which he had not even a foreshadowing. He had seen nothing of soldiers in England, having had the good fortune never to live in a garrison town; brought up at a public school and at Oxford, with the prospect of taking orders, he was not fool enough to fancy himself now inspired with an irrepressible military ardor; and as for the red-coat illusion, which does undoubtedly decoy many poor lads to India, why he was past one-and-twenty; and though that is certainly no very venerable age, yet is the difference between it and sixteen infinite. Edward Oakfield was not a boy, but a man. He got into his palki then, when the mystery of that process had been expounded to him, with

an anxious mind; yet, on the whole, as he jogged along, harassed by his fears that he was tiring the poor bearers, and looked over the green esplanade to the line of palaces of which Government House forms the centre, looked at the river and shipping, felt that pleasant excitement which all but idiots do feel at the consciousness of being in a new and strange country, the sight of Asiatic trees, the hum of Asiatic tongues cheered him; the feeling of hope, which he had expressed on board the steamer, revived, — hope founded not upon any grounds of reason or experience, but, as our hopes often are, on a soothing sense of present enjoyment. Meanwhile it were false to say that he did not think of his dinner; it was six o'clock, and they had breakfasted at eight on board the Precursor; moreover, he looked forward to a pleasant little dinner with Stanton at the Calcutta "Long's." In this, however, he was destined to meet his first Indian disappointment, for he found that "Spence's," however amiable an establishment, was as unlike "Long's" as Mount Vesuvius in its internal economy; and the *recherché* little dinner which he had promised himself, alone with his friend, was ill replaced by the promiscuous table d'hôte, at which he shortly sat down for the first time in an Indian white-jacketed society. There was a good deal of conversation during dinner. Stanton had met some old acquaintance; Oakfield sat and listened.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Stanton, when dinner was over and cheroots were lighted.

"O, I do n't know that there 's much to think; of course all those white-robed fellows behind the chairs look odd to me, and so do those things up there."

"What, the punkahs? They will have an effect upon you that you do n't suspect, if you sit here long."

"What is that?"

"Send you to sleep. Well, but what did you think of the party as a random specimen of Calcutta society?"

"Really I can't tell, for I was not in a listening, still less in a criticising mood. I could n't understand a good deal of what seemed to be Calcutta 'shop.' People seemed to talk freely enough. I suppose it was as social an affair as a table d'hôte dinner at an English inn would be; but, my dear fellow, let us move, for I feel your punkah prophecy coming true already."

They went out and walked down the court to the room which they shared. Here they resumed their conversation.

"Does it seem strange to you, Oakfield, to find yourself in India?"

"No, I do not think it does; but the fact is, I dwell less upon the thought of India and my being in India than you perhaps imagine. I feel oppressed, certainly; but more with a sense of doubt than anything else."

"Doubt as to what?" asked Stanton; "as to the propriety of your choice in coming out here?"

"No," said the other decidedly, "not about that; the only point on which I feel clear is that I did right in leaving Oxford, dearly as I loved it; but I am full of doubt as to what is to come next. My whole resolution about India was so sudden, and so negative, to get rid of the present was so much more my object than to arrange a future, that now I find myself actually started on a new reach of life with not even a shadow of an impression, I do not say as to its pains and pleasures, but its dangers and duties."

"They will open themselves to you," said Stanton.

"Will they indeed? Did they so to you?"

Stanton looked embarrassed; presently he added, "You never told me yet why you left Oxford."

"No, — I will some day."

"Some day! — there is your reserve."

"My dear old boy, you reproach me with that reserve, more than you of all people in the world should do; for if

there is a reserved man on earth I should say it was Hugh Stanton; but in this case I only postpone telling you because we all postpone what is difficult, and I should really find it hard to tell you, or myself either, exactly, *why* I came out here; but besides this, if the charge were true, and if you had a right to make it, I am not disposed to give up reserve as a fair matter of reproach; or if it is, which of us may cast a stone? Which of us is — nay, to be candid, which of us would wish to be without reserve? Are not you and I both equally reserved at this present time? I am much mistaken if, beneath our conversation on comparatively light things, there is not reserved a common religious feeling which will not show itself in more than a certain gravity, — almost sadness."

"Humph!" said Stanton, "I do n't know, I 'm sure; do you mean to speak of this religious feeling as always present, hidden under this or that superficiality?"

"To a certain extent I do; I believe we are all, I believe certainly that you and I are, in our ordinary tone of mind, more religious than we allow ourselves to seem to be; but I did mean, particularly at this present time, that when speaking of duties and dangers, — the life past and the life future, — there is vibrating in both our hearts a deeper chord which neither of us dare touch upon. Is it not so?"

"I will not deny it of this present time, most assuredly," said Stanton more affectionately than was his wont, he being rather a cold-mannered man; "but yet I can hardly believe that our ordinary life, much as it does conceal, conceals much religion. I for one dare not think so highly of myself."

"So highly!" cried Oakfield. "Say rather so lowly. It is not to our credit that the feeling is there, but to our shame and peril that we smother it."

"What do you mean then by religious feeling?"

"Any feeling that is of faith and not of sight," said Oak-

field; "do n't think I am going, Oxford-fashion, to tie you down to a creed; still less that I wish to look at the comparative merits of Brahminism and Christianity as an open question; but still I do think that all those feelings which draw us away from yesterday, and to-day, and to-morrow, are better worth cherishing than the wretched shams with which we cloak them. This is the reserve which is to be condemned; and of this we are all guilty; even you and I in our private conversation, — still more in the world, where, indeed, we give way to it altogether. What is often called and condemned as reserve, is really either a constitutional shyness, which, as an unavoidable misfortune, is no fair matter of reproach, or a very proper reluctance to be Jack and Tom with every fool you meet. Certainly the first had nothing to do with my hanging back about Oxford, and I do n't think I need tell you that it was not the last."

"Well," said Stanton, "I will remember your promise, and hear of your Oxford career some day; meanwhile, I must go to bed, as I have to go out to Dum Dum early to-morrow. I shall be back here the day after, and shall, I suppose, find you in the fort. I leave you to the mosquitos. Good-night."

"Good-night, old fellow; God bless you."

CHAPTER II.

"Seize, seize the hour
Ere it slips from you. Seldom comes the moment
In life, which is indeed sublime and mighty
To make a just decision possible."

COLERIDGE.

THE next day Stanton went down to Dum Dum; and Oakfield, after presenting himself at Fort William, went to Garden Reach, to accept an invitation which had promptly followed the delivery of one of his numerous letters of introduction. Here he stayed for about a fortnight, during which time he became a little more accustomed to Indian, or at least Calcutta fashions. The indiscriminate hospitality which takes in as many guests as the house will hold, feeds and shelters them, and nothing more, found little favor with him at first; though he was forced to acknowledge that, in a community where, partly by custom, partly by necessity, private individuals had to stand in the place of innkeepers to new-comers, it was more gracious to admire the liberality with which all doors were thrown open to receive unknown guests, than to complain of the little attention paid to them when received. He saw little of Calcutta society. It was the month of April, so he was confined to the house reading and writing all day, and in the evening was content to saunter in the magnificent walks by the banks of the river, without seeking to go further. To tell the truth, he was still stunned by the wonderful change which a few weeks had

wrought *for*, but not *in* him. He himself being unchanged, he was perplexed by the entire metamorphose of all his circumstances. Both what was gone and what was come pressed upon him, now that the excitement of the overland voyage was past. His beloved Northern home, — his friends, — his country, — and that University where three years of his life had rolled by in such a continual flow of unchecked happiness, — all these were as the sound of a familiar note within him; while not less audible, but in strange and jarring accompaniment, was that awakened by the new sights and sounds which met him at every turn. There were the scorching sun and almost fearful verdure of Bengal; the ceaseless hum of unseen animal life; the white, flat-roofed, hundred-doored palaces of the European inhabitants; the mud hovels of the swarming natives; the natives themselves, and their strange language; the dull, broad Hooghly, bearing down the dead bodies of Hindus, glad to have their last home in its holy waters, — bearing, too, the living ships of less revering nations to all parts of the globe; there, above all, were the palm and the banian-tree, so alive with Oriental association, speaking of a time ere yet that British power, now so manifest in all directions, had emerged from infancy in its own island cradle; when the same scene might have been witnessed here, — the same scorching sky, — the same rich vegetation, — the same funereal river; while primeval Brahmins, sitting in primeval groves, asked, "Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?" Mixed with the first impressions of outward objects, arose, in Oakfield's mind, that wonder which must more or less strike every one on first arrival in India, — which may well follow them all the days of their sojourn there, — for most wonderful it is, — at the extraordinary fact of British dominion, so manifest everywhere; apparently so firmly planted in the soil, and yet so manifest-

ly separate from it; so that while it was impossible to fancy the power being swept away, it was easy to look round and think of it as gone; the prominent feature in the picture, still, were it once removed, the picture would seem almost the same without it. But his wonder was reverent, not unmixed with awe, for he felt how surely Nemesis attended upon the power which he witnessed, and had doubts whether Nemesis had been altogether satisfied. But the thoughts which gave the prevailing tone to the maze which bewildered him were themselves most indistinct. He was dissatisfied with himself, and knew not why; he had a vague sense of a general life, independent of that of time or place, which he still was separated from; he was dimly conscious of a state of truthfulness from which his ordinary conversation with the world still kept him apart. At times he had flashes of conviction in which the truth seemed to stand out to him clear even to a truism. In these seasons the insincerity of ordinary society and ordinary life became intolerable to him: standing face to face, as it were, with truth, he shuddered at the thousand separations of deed and manner which the common routine of civilized life was ever interposing. Religiously brought up as a child, he had passed a creditable career at Winchester; and, full of hopeful confidence, went up to Oxford as a student of Christ Church. There his outward life was one of rare and awful happiness. In that wonderful society, where, for three years, an income of £200 a year can command all the pleasures which wealth and the highest civilization alone confer elsewhere; where common respectability is a pass to the flower of English society; where the regularity and cheerful monotony of monastic life are combined with the manly energy, the rare independence, the luxurious refinement, which are so characteristic of our modern English universities, — the days of his youth were spent. But he was not a man who could eat

and drink, rise up to play, and be satisfied. In those changing years, from nineteen to twenty-one, his mind, hitherto quiescent or satisfied by the claims of school and college duty, began to work; and he soon found that, under whatever name concealed, religion must still be the one matter of interest for an immortal being. And the one great difficulty with him was to acquire an equable impression of this truth. He looked to others to help him; he sought external aid against those seasons of dull epicurean indifference, from which he woke from time to time, with a painful start, to the true condition of his being. For some time he inclined to the Tractarian influence then so prevalent in Oxford, and thought for a while that he had found the help he needed; when lo! again, in an hour of startling conviction, he found that the forms with which he had been so busily lulling his conscience had as little of the divine in them as the forms of common worldly society. The reaction followed, and he hated the Church which he thought had deceived him; the idea of taking orders became intolerable, and the question of what he should do came before him. Deeply impressed with the conviction that his first business in life was to deliver his own soul, he still fell into the natural error of looking round for those circumstances which might make this most easy. He had not learnt yet that it is a work far beyond the aid, happily equally beyond the control, of circumstances; he thought of emigrating. In the colonies, in a new, fresh, and vigorous society, he thought form would, at any rate, weigh less heavily upon truth; society, if it did not help, would surely not hinder him. In this direction he was met by practical difficulties at all hands; till at last, transferring his notions of colonial to Anglo-Indian society, with an ignorance marvellous indeed, but common to all Englishmen not connected by family ties with India, he fancied he had solved the problem, — that by

obtaining an Indian appointment a maintenance would be secured to him, while he, under utterly new circumstances, might begin life anew, try once more to realize his theory of bringing religion into daily life, without the necessity of denying it at every turn in obedience to some fashion or dogma of society; and then, as to his work in life, was not every European in India engaged in the grand work of civilizing Asia? So he wrote to his friends that he wished to go to India. His mother was disappointed, but not altogether astonished. The last vacation that Edward had spent at home, she had observed with anxiety the painful, unsettled state of his mind; had watched how he still sought help from without, and seemed daily more and more disappointed as he daily failed to find it. Still the blow to Mrs. Oakfield was severe. The loss of her eldest son would be none the less severely felt that a large and happy family remained behind. Fondly attached herself to that Church of which her husband had been, during thirty years, a faithful minister, Mrs. Oakfield had hoped, erelong, to see her son working in the same harvest-field; and the very thought of the military profession was in itself painful to one who had passed all her days amid most unmilitary influences; who had long been learning daily lessons of love and peace among the lakes and hills of Cumberland. Still, she was too wise a woman, and too good a mother, to oppose what she knew to be the conscientious wish of her son; and when, after some time, she found him quite earnest in his determination, she exerted herself in the hitherto *terra incognita* of East Indian patronage to procure the appointment, as though it had been the darling wish of her own heart. At last her efforts were successful, and Mr. Edward Oakfield, B. A., son of the late Rev. E. Oakfield, M. A., was appointed a cadet of infantry, on the Bengal Establishment. It was with a heart full of love and tenderness that he went down to

spend his last Christmas at Leatheburn, which place he would have to leave for India in January, 1845. He was at Oxford when he received the news of his appointment, enjoying the leisurely life of a long-sleeved bachelor. Most thoroughly would he have enjoyed it had not his somewhat morbid mind suspected, and felt alarmed at, the very sense of its happiness. He had read respectably, and taken a good "second"; his conduct *in statu pupillari* had been stainless; loving the river, and pulling in the "college eight," having a large out-college acquaintance, and generally "knocking in" very late at nights, he was yet *sans reproche* in the eyes of the censors, and had even attained to the capricious favor of the Dean, by occasionally reading a theme in hall. His prospects in life were, in common parlance, good. He might "stay up" on his studentship with the chance of a tutorship, and the certainty of a living; or he might perhaps be vicar of Leatheburn, as his father had been before him. But even had he felt inclined to yield to this seducing prospect, the Thirty-nine Articles stood up as an impassable barrier; and though he felt that, if any one told him he was a fool to give up his present position and go to India for no earthly reason, he would find it hard to answer him, yet he felt also that he really was acting not foolishly, but wisely; he verily believed that in the happiness of his college life there had been and was a benumbing influence which it was wise in him to shake off, though he might find it impossible to explain to others why he did so. Still it was a blow to him when he walked across Tom Quad with the open letter, announcing his appointment, in his hand, and looked up to Tom Tower, and thought that the nights were numbered in which he would have his share in the hundred and one mystical strokes. His interview with the Dean was short, and to the point. Dr. Seaford was not a man to make leave-taking painful, and as Oakfield

received his cold and hardly courteous permission to leave the college, he could not help feeling glad, among his many regrets, that he had at least done with the Dean of Christ Church.

His parting with his friends was painful, — with the place itself mournful, — with that important member of a college establishment, the cook, comi-tragic. He, the cook, had ever been accustomed to regard the Dean of Christ Church as the great planet of the world; the canons, tutors, and students, as moons of graduated dignity revolving round him. The idea of a young student voluntarily quitting that position, not for a living, nor yet to marry; retiring in fact upon nothing, was new to him, and rather shocking. He suspected that there was "something under it."

Oakfield was amused at his openly-expressed wonder, not to say contempt. After all, he thought, this man does but express plainly what almost all my friends think. Those who preach on Sundays, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, think me a fool or worse, because I, believing what they preach, seek a life where I have more hope of laying hold upon things that are not vain. Assuredly the life here is a wonderfully pleasant one; I have little enough temptation to go roaming, God knows.

So, thinking he looked his last upon Oxford, and having taken a farewell pull on the river, and eaten a farewell dinner in hall, he left the place where he had spent the three last care-checkered years of his life, and that night travelled down to Leatheburn. To one who had been brought up among the mountains there were other than human friends to be parted with. In his solitary walks by the lake, in his last pilgrimage to the top of Helvellyn, whence he looked down upon almost the whole of that mountain district, which was to him a lesser country, for which all his feelings, as an Englishman, were doubly refined, he felt how

much he was about to sacrifice. One afternoon, walking with his usual companion, his favorite sister, about two years younger than himself, he expressed, for the only time, some doubt as to the step he had taken.

"What," he said, "Margaret, if, after all, this should be a mistake, to be found out too late?"

"You do not think that," she replied.

"I do n't know: sometimes I fancy that I am more driven by a superstitious, unfaithful dread of the happiness of my present life, than by any distinct call to go abroad." He stopped, as if expecting an answer.

"You know, dear Edward," his sister said tenderly, "you know how hard it is for me to answer you. You have said so little to me, or any of us, as to your reasons for this sad change; none of us dare urge you to stay, but do not expect me to find reasons why you should go."

"I had no wish, I am sure, Margaret, to be reserved to my own family; I have told you as much as I have my mother; but I have told her very little, for there is a confusion in my own mind, in the midst of which I can detect, more by instinct than by reason, the necessity of the step I am taking; and yet I now regret not having forced myself to be more communicative, if only for my own sake, that by utterance my views might become clearer to myself."

"Well then," said his sister laughing, "let me catechise you."

"But not in the hope of perverting me?"

"No, no; quite disinterestedly; for your own sake you know. To begin: how long is it since you first took this notion of going abroad into your head?"

"I can answer that more precisely than you expect," replied her brother; "do you remember the last day before I left home last October, my walking to Anderton alone?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, in my way back I sat down at the top of Dunmail Raise, and there I stayed for an hour or more, over the old king's bones; and out of that hour's cogitations has sprung my cadetship. I had to go up to Oxford the next day, for my last term. You know how much I had been occupied all that vacation with the thought of the schools; but that day, for the first time, I looked steadily beyond the degree epoch, and then —"

"And what then, Edward."

"Why a maze, a jungle: the one thing I could see clearly was that the time was coming when I must do something, and that all the natural openings to me were blocked up by the impossibility of my taking orders."

"Alas! Edward, who would have thought, a year ago, that you would have spoken of that as an impossibility?"

"Alas! say I too, dear Margaret; and were the Church of England and its ministry always and everywhere what we have seen here with our dear father in these happy valleys, the impossibility would never have been; supposing, at least, all such stumbling-blocks as the Thirty-nine Articles taken out of the way; but how could I devote myself for life to the service of that Church which I have tried and found so cruelly wanting? In some things I still love the Church of England; — the gentlemanly element in it, as it has been called, and by which I understand the seemliness of its ordinances and ritual, — so satisfying to one's mere taste, — is, and always will be, a great attraction to me; but when I think of its wretched sectarian spirit, such as I have seen and known it, of its profession, so magnificently exalted, and its practice, so often standing in the way of, and even persecuting, the Truth, I shudder at the thought of yielding myself to it, as I would fain hope to yield myself to whatever service I may enter."

"But you could surely have stayed at Oxford without taking orders?"

"Rather like a fish out of water; besides, I do not feel capable of a retired hermit life; and the mixing in society, without any active business in it, was what I dreaded. No, I am sure that I was right there, that if I would not take orders I could not stay at the University. Well, then, you see what was left, — the bar? It is a hopeless calling in these days, even had I myself any vocation for it. And besides, — in short, Margaret, I may and will say to you, what I would hardly say to any one else, — I shrink from saying it even to myself, because I feel it is a principle so far above my practice; but still I do believe it, and that it is which lies at the bottom of all my restlessness, as people call it, — I cannot reconcile my belief in the Bible with ordinary life and its ordinary fashions and practices. You see the impossibility of alleging this as a motive; exposing one's self to charges of inconsistency at every turn; and I have given way to these fashions as much as anybody. I feel that, if I could lay bare my heart to the most loving of friends, he would be hardly able to pity me; seeing how impossible it is for me to reconcile the world with truth, the most partial would condemn, as something too gross for pity, my weakness, if not my hypocrisy. From the latter I can only say I am free, God knows it; I could only assert it, hardly expecting to be believed. Yet, though I have lived in the world, — though I doubt whether even the men with whom I mixed most at Christ Church thought me a religious man, and that, because I could not and would not adopt the phraseology and habits which they are accustomed to think of as going to make up a religious man, — because I longed to combine what they are taught to think most separate, the utmost freedom of thought and a firm belief in the New Testament, — because, lastly, despairing of being understood or tolerated if I said all that I thought, I said nothing, and joined in their pursuits, and their amusements and conver-

sation, as though I had all in common with them, — still I declare that, while taking a genuine interest in these things, there was ever another and a far deeper interest beneath, which I shared not with them, and of which they knew nothing, and that I still cherished in my inmost heart, though in my practice so weak and stumbling, the religion of Christ, as the one thing needful. A fool would say that this was saying a great deal for myself. I know that I say it with feelings farthest from self-laudation, with bitter self-reproach rather, that the religious feeling and desire, which I do aver was predominantly present to me, did not show itself more in my living. I know there ought to have been a marked difference between me and worldly men, — felt by them, though not displayed by me; that there was not, was from my utter weakness; but still, when I fancy myself back in the same society, I can hardly fancy things being different; I could not adopt language and habits which would be unnatural to me as long as we kept to things extraneous to religion.

"My friends and I got on very well; pleasant, clever, gentlemanly fellows they were, and I was and am attached to them sincerely; but once or twice, when, sorely against the grain, I did try to open what you would call a religious conversation, I found it would not do. No; I can understand a man going into society, as some men did, at the time of the Reformation, and afterwards of the first Wesleyan movements, and at the entire sacrifice of personal feelings boldly rebuking vice and speaking the truth; but such a man is not a member of society, — he is a prophet, an apostle. But are all prophets? For those who are not prepared to sacrifice themselves, or feel unequal to the task, I see only two courses open, — either to quit society altogether, or to mix in it on its own terms; having one's religion between one's self and God, and, if one be happy enough

to find them, some favored friends, such as, thank God, I have in my own family; but as to being in the world and not of it, I recognize that, indeed, as a perfect idea, but from my own experience, pronounce it, for myself at least, impossible. That the way in which I have hitherto evaded this problem has been weak and wretched I will allow, it is that very thing that impels me to break off from my late life, for I see no possibility in that life of solving it."

"But, Edward, if the attractive and agreeable society which you mixed in was irreligious, surely there was other to be found, less pleasant, perhaps, but where you would not have been so tempted to the dangerous compromise you describe."

"In the first place, I doubt, Margaret, whether I, or indeed anybody, is capable of so fearful a sacrifice as joining himself for life to utterly uncongenial society; and, besides, with them I should have had to act other lies, less dangerous, perhaps, than in the former case, but still false and destroying, as all lies are. I don't the least mean to say that many of those men, with their surplice and white-tie fiddle-faddle, were not really excellent men, better men, how often have I felt, than I; the forms which they extol and love may be a help to them, but they were not, and never could be, to me; and it would be utterly impossible, when struggling for life and death with such fearful realities as sin and ignorance, to have any true sympathy with those who are ever thrusting to you, as the one panacea, the shape of a building or the cut of a waistcoat. At least I tried it and found I could not."

"But surely all the religious men in Oxford are not of this party?"

"Some of the best and ablest of them are: men who, I always felt, must have had a deep sense of the living truth

under this panoply of external frippery; but there was no getting at it, and so for me it might as well not have been. I never was guilty of the presumptuous folly of thinking they were not truth-loving men, but I found that, as I myself loved the truth, yet ignored it in deference to the fashion of the society I lived in, so did they completely smother it under their white-ticism; so it was only a difference of disguises; for I consider boat-racing and cricket every bit as much matters of religion as surplice questions, and so on; but still, as you say, there were others, — religious men certainly, and whom their worst enemies could not have accused of Popish vanities; but, if I am to make a painful sacrifice, I prefer going to India to joining Exeter Hall. Mind, do n't think again that I do n't know, and admire, and revere the excellence of many individuals calling themselves Evangelicals, but I do think that their party bitterness, and ignorant, self-satisfied narrow-mindedness, has done more harm to the cause of good than the great Popery lie itself. They again seem to me to overload the truth as injuriously with their unlearned semi-magical prophecy disquisitions, and wretched belaboring of that poor dead giant Popery, as the other people with surplice follies, &c., — and, as a matter of taste, the last is more attractive."

"But surely, Edward, there are religious men who are not partisans?"

"God forbid we should doubt it, Margaret, for they are the salt of the earth; but either they keep their holy secret in their own hearts, and bow in sadness to a state of things which they are not strong enough to alter, or when they are to be seen at all, they are alone, isolated, misunderstood, shedding truth indeed in all directions, which does or will bear fruit somewhen or somewhere, but which has not penetrated yet into society, so as to remodel even a small portion of it. There are men whom one may look up at and ad-

mire, and thank God for, — such men there are; but societies — or sections of a society of such men — not."

"But do n't you think, Edward, that these men, who you admit are to be found, have themselves met with the same want in society which you have? And yet you see they have remained, and have overcome."

"*They* have, — but how many have remained, and have *not* overcome, but yielded; either led away altogether by the worldliness which so infects the whole air around them, or, if seeking that help from society which it is natural to man to seek, are deceived by one false guide or another, till with desperate heresy they choose a guide, false or true, and abide by it rather than seek any longer; drugging their consciences with forms and ceremonies, or deafening them with some sectarian war-cry; or, which is every day becoming more and more common, seeing on the one hand the dominion of the world so strong that they cannot but believe it to be half divine, and on the other disgusted with the pettiness of one party and the ignorant folly of another, they think that the faith over which the two profess to be wrangling is itself a narrowness and a folly; and shake off, as they suppose, all bonds of old belief; and believe in what they see, — the world; or in what they feel, — their own intellectual powers; and so pass on into a wretched jumble of epicureanism and self-worship, — which is, I think, Margaret, a greater calamity than going to India."

"But do you expect that going to India will free you from these dangers and difficulties?"

"Ah, stop! you are getting on too fast; what I am telling you now is why I left Oxford. I do not know what I go to, but I know that I leave what is full of danger to me. You must remember that it is not often in life that one can change one's circumstances. I find myself surrounded by those which hinder rather than help me; I will make an effort and detach myself from them while I yet can."

"But do you not, then, ever contemplate the possibility of finding yourself worse off in India than at home? You see you do not know what to expect; suppose your experiment fails. You cannot be in the same position as if you had never made it."

"Why, I think I should shrink less than you would expect from the possibility of having to confess my experiment a failure. I think the virtue of abiding consistently by one thing is rather exaggerated by feelings of worldly prudence; I do not see why it is not as reasonable for a man's convictions to fix his circumstances, as for his circumstances, which is generally the case, to fix his convictions."

"Would you have all the world, then, continually shifting their business, in the vain hope of finding some path which might make their duty easy?"

"Your *reductio ad absurdum*, my darling catechiser, might be conclusive, if the world at large were very anxious about the path of duty, about the truth, that is; but those who honestly seek this, and not an income, as the first thing in life, will always be a minority."

"But this minority must *have* incomes; they must have enough to live upon."

"I admit it, and that law of necessity must, to a certain extent, influence their road in life; but need not, and should not, I am certain, to one twentieth part the extent it does. It is in obedience to this law that I go to India, which is by no means the thing of all others which I esteem the best, but, as far as I see, the best possible; the best combination of the requirements of my inner and outer man."

"And yet you have said nothing as to how you expect it in any way to satisfy the former."

"No; — because my first great motive is not to do, but to undo; always, you know, the beginning of reform; not to choose this or that future, but to get rid of this present;

— and yet there is something attractive in the notion of India, even to my vague and ignorant conceptions of it. A man there must almost feel his very existence, as one of the English possessors of India, of some historical dignity, and the first steps in active life bring him at once to real, immediate concern with the world's march. But I know so little of India, that it is more candid to own that I do make this step as an experiment, — feeling sure that I do right in leaving England, where I can do nothing, and where I fear little good is being done to me; where I cannot but think that the daily spectacle of social enormities, so utterly irreconcilable with the faith which you and I hold, must have a bad effect upon a man's mind, leading him almost imperceptibly, by constant use, to acquiesce in what is false and monstrous; and having thus made up my mind to leave England, I see no chance of that necessary income we were speaking of, anywhere but in India."

"So then you take a new life on trial, convinced only that your present life will not do for you?"

"Precisely so."

"And what if, on trial, your new life does not suit you any better?"

"That question I think I may answer by saying, 'Take no thought for the morrow.' I honestly believe it to be my duty to go; I shall go in faith; not hoping to be miraculously fed and clothed, but still not thinking about the matter till I am obliged to. Besides, I will not begin my new life by supposing it will be a failure; in the utterly unknown future there is hope, which I shall hold by as long as I can. Have I satisfied you?"

"You have so far satisfied me that I believe you are right, thinking as you do, to give up an Oxford life."

"An English life, say; and then can you think of anything else I could do if I would?"

"No, — I cannot."

"Well, then, I have one confidante who knows why I go; at least, as much as I do myself; and who, when she hears of my life in India, will think of this walk by dear Thirlwater on this quiet gray November afternoon, and of that hour on Dunmail Raise last summer, from which my Indian life was born. O Margaret! do you think I have much temptation to go? I think nothing so proves the miraculous power that money or 'prospects in life' have over men, as the way in which they will always give up family and country for them. God knows that no lower hope than truth and a peaceful conscience could draw me, I do not say from you all, but from this beloved country."

He was much moved, and they walked on in silence. It was one of those damp, mild evenings, so common in a Northern winter, when all things seem in harmony with peaceful sorrow and "calm decay." The clouds which had been drawn up over the northern extremity of the valley, leaving a space filled by the looming misty outline of Blencathra, now rolled down nearly to the lake, while the evening darkness, succeeding almost without an interval to sunset, made all objects in the quiet meadows, through which Oakfield and his sister were walking homewards, more and more indistinct, till nothing was to be seen but the white bank of clouds that shrouded Helvellyn, and the lights in the scattered farms up the hill-side; nothing heard but the lapping of the waters of the lake, and the murmur of the running brooks down Leatheburn Fells.

CHAPTER III.

"I find myself
As among strangers ! not a trace is left
Of all my former wishes, former joys ;
Where has it vanished to ? There was a time
When even, methought, with such a world as this
I was not discontented ! Now how flat !
How stale ! No life, no bloom, no flavor in it !
My comrades are intolerable to me ;
My arms, my military duties, — Oh !
They are such wearying toys."

COLERIDGE.

THE day arrived that Oakfield was to leave home. It were a mistake to suppose that the strength of his conviction, as to the necessity of leaving the country, in any way deadened to him the pain of breaking up all old associations and parting from his family. His brother Herbert, eight or nine years younger than himself, just gone to Winchester, was to accompany him to Southampton ; he had to take leave of the rest at home. It was a tearful breakfast party that morning. His little sisters, of four and five years old, had, of course, very vague notions about India, but they had a consciousness that "Eddie" was going very far off, and as there seemed to be a good deal of crying going on, of course they helped. Margaret, as her custom was, was too much engaged in comforting others to give way to her own sorrow at losing that best of all friends to a girl, an elder brother. To poor Mrs. Oakfield it was the heaviest blow that had

befallen her since her husband's death. There was not much said, and in the silence of deep sorrow they parted. His young brother accompanied him to the harbor at Southampton; and when he could no longer distinguish him among the crowd on the quay, Edward Oakfield felt that the separation from his family was complete, and the new chapter of his life begun. We need not follow him through the often-described overland route. In company with Stanton he wandered over the Rock of Gibraltar; admired the blue sky, the white ground, and orange-gardened streets of Malta; visited Cleopatra's Needle, at Alexandria; gazed in speechless wonder at the Pyramids of Egypt; felt himself, not without awe, within fifty miles of Mount Sinai; feasted his eyes upon the tropical beauty of Ceylon; was tossed in the surf of Madras; and finally landed in Calcutta, as has been already described, in the beginning of April.

He had not been long at Garden Reach when he received orders to go up the river to Hajeepoor, there to do duty with the 81st regiment of Native Infantry.

Fresh from England, his robust frame was little affected by the tremendous heat of a steamer on the Ganges, in the month of May; he was inclined to hope that the horrors of the Indian climate had been exaggerated. The scenery, too, exceeded his expectations; the terrible forest solitude of the Sunderbunds was full of interest to an European imagination. And although, higher up, the banks of the Ganges had little beauty to recommend them, yet the hugeness of the river and the sight of the alligators had a novelty that might make up for a little dulness. There were three more cadets on the same steamer, going up to that great griff depôt, Oudapoor, as uninteresting as boys of seventeen, fresh from a private school, generally are. Just as Oakfield was beginning to get tired of the Ganges and live alligators, he reached Hajeepoor, and proceeded, in a palki, to call upon the adjutant

of the corps to which he was attached, and was by him introduced to the officers of the regiment, and initiated into the mysteries of the goose step.

And now his experience of Indian society began; and what conclusion he drew from this experience may be best seen by a letter written by him to Stanton two months after his arrival at Hajeepoor.

"My dear Stanton: —

"I begin to think I have made a mistake. There, — the murder 's out, and get your laugh over as soon as you can. Don't think that I 'm going back again just yet; I have registered a vow to give the country a fair trial, — three years at least; though I confess I dread the prospect, unless most stations are very unlike Hajeepoor, and most regiments very different from the 81st. Where is the energy by which British India has been conquered? Not in the army, — at least in the officers. These are really, in nine cases out of ten, so far as I have seen, mere animals, with no single idea on any subject in the world beyond their carcasses. We have all been accustomed to hear the officers of the Queen's army spoken of as models of gentlemanliness at any rate; and the good world has almost confessedly excused their notorious immorality, as a professional failing, to be regretted indeed, but still quite atoned for by their intense polish; which things I had transferred to the Company's army; and was really quite astounded to find that even this quality was wanting. I do not mean only that the higher elements of the gentlemanly character are wanting. Courtesy to inferiors (Heaven save the mark in this country! fancy talking to an officer of courtesy to a native!), honesty in money transactions, and so on; but there is not even a refinement of outward manners; so far from being above, they seem infinitely below par in this respect. I had always thought of a mess as the abode of luxurious refinement, even it might be to effeminacy. I find it a bad tavern, without the comfort of even such an establishment. I had not expected to hear literary conversation at a mess-table, but still less such appalling ribaldry as I did hear in the fortnight during which I belonged to the mess. I am not likely

to be prudish in these matters; I have spent all my life at Winchester and Oxford, and at both places have been in company with boys and men who were noted for this style of conversation, but am quite certain that a man saying, at a wine party, such things as are common at the 81st mess, would have been kicked out of the room as a gross offender, I do not say against morality, but gentlemanly taste. They pride themselves, indeed, on a very subtle distinction between dinner and after dinner. A man is supposed to be reasonably decent while the cloth is on the table, but may compensate himself by the utmost license of blackguardism directly it is off. I stayed in the mess for a fortnight, but could not stand it any longer; so now I live alone, and see very little of the officers in consequence. Another source of astonishment to my unsophisticated mind is the utter absence, not only of gentlemanly, but military feeling. There are more exceptions here than in the other case, I own. There are more *officers* than *gentlemen;* and there are two men in the regiment who appear to be both; but, for the rest, they are about as much soldiers as they are Christians; and their worst enemy could not reproach them with the latter title. I suppose they would fight in action, but as to the duties of a soldier in time of peace, they entirely ignore them. How on earth a corps holds together with such an utter absence of discipline and *esprit de corps* on the part of its officers, I cannot imagine; I suppose it is that the adjutant is a good officer, and does the work of the whole regiment himself. The rest are nonentities; but I pity poor John Company, who must find them terribly expensive ones. As to the commanding officer, there *is* one I know, for I called on him, and saw the poor old man on parade at muster, but otherwise might be in happy ignorance of his existence; it would be hard to blame him for doing nothing, and being a complete cipher in the regiment which he is paid for commanding, because he is, I believe, physically incapable, half blind, quite lame, and almost imbecile. Whether the command of a regiment should be intrusted to such a man, is quite another question. I can only say that Jack Sepoy must be a very docile animal, and require very little commanding.

"I go out very little, and spend most of my time in reading, glad

to find that I can become so reconciled to solitude. But I am not sure that solitude is a good or natural condition for a man to be in; but better, I am quite sure, and more natural, than bad, worthless society. I want to know how you have managed and do manage. Is it that I am singularly unlucky in the lines that have fallen to me? or is it that you have already become, like the eels, used to skinning, and that I before long shall become so too? Still I feel at times glad to be here; after the enervating ease of an university life, I fancy that the cold bath of physical and mental discomfort is a good, though harsh, remedy. So I trust; and so for the present I solace myself with the hope that I am being schooled by discipline; but what the future is to be I cannot guess any more than I could four months ago. I am reading the languages, and find 'Bagh o Bahar,' slow, certainly; but universal experience and common sense agree in recommending these studies, grievous as they are. 'And if you pass,' say my dear, good-natured friends, 'you may get an appointment!' Bus! (You see my Hindostanee knowledge already carries me the length of that emphatic monosyllable.) And you will think me affected and fastidious, my dear, good-natured friends, if I ask, 'What then?' What if the extra allowances have really no attraction; what if the 'getting on in life' seem to be only a more subtle way of holding out the same bait? I want to know what the life is in which you think it good to get on. It seems to me that my object in life must be, not so much to get an appointment, or to get on in the world, as to do work. And the obvious work of every European in India seems to me to be to justify his title to his position in a country not his own, by helping to civilize it. And do the people who hold your appointments do this? Is this the main purpose of the Indian government, which makes appointments? because I think it depends upon this a good deal whether the appointments are such good things to get. However, I am getting on too fast, only I am sometimes provoked by the cool way in which people assume that what is good for them must be good for you. I am sure I do not quarrel with them for thinking appointments good things *per se;* I only beg them not to expect me to think so; but this they will not agree to; but still take as an axiom in discussing what they call 'prospects

in life,' that money, and position in society, and so on, are undoubtedly good things, as certainly as truth and courage are. And yet, doubtless, all who talk so have written in their copy-books, when children, that 'the love of money is the root of all evil,' and have heard on Sundays, as men, that there are temptations attached to rank, and so on, and thought it all very right and proper of the preacher to preach so; but alas! the morality sticks to the copy-book, and the religion is reserved for the Sunday sermon; and a man who tries seriously, on Monday morning, to follow out the maxim, and lives as though he believed the Sunday discourse, is obliged either to leave society for a dreary, solitary, unprofitable hermit's life, or to be regarded as a hypocrite or a fanatic. And thus you will find that, with a few exceptions, to be counted by units, all the religious men of your acquaintance have been compelled, either to quit society altogether, and thus have no influence in it at all, and confine their labors to a narrow, too often to a narrowing, bigoted circle; or, if they remain in society, so to compromise matters that their religion itself is become to you a doubtful matter. How to hit the mean between these two is the great problem which I, at the threshold of life, have to solve, — which baffled me at Oxford, — and which is still too much for me here.

"The first alternative — the hermitizing — is the one which you see I adopt at present, simply because it is less tempting, and therefore likely to be safer; but I need not tell you that I am far from satisfied with, and cannot but be restless in it. I have comfort in reading of men who have, I suppose, had the same problem to solve in their time, and yet I cannot but feel that in no age has it been so difficult as it is for us now. For the Devil, in these days, has grown so confoundedly respectable, that it is impossible to denounce him in a shape that shall at once be recognized and allowed as evil. When men were persecuted for the very profession of Christianity, Christianity was likely, with those who did profess it, to be a real thing; and a man had but to make up his mind and choose a course, plain, clear, manifest to all men; and so on through the downward generations; in the struggle of the Reformers with Popery, with the living — not, as now-a-days, at Exeter Hall, with the dead — giant, and in the Puritan movement, in England, Good and Evil, Truth and Falsehood, stood divided

by a broad, intelligible line of demarcation. But now they are all jumbled together in such a delicious hotchpotch, — Christian form and heathen fact, — Christian Sunday preaching, — that the true course for a good man to navigate is become almost undiscernible. He may desire the truth, and think that in some measure he, in his own mind, discerns it; he goes out and is at once met by some universal usage of society which his sense of truth immediately recognizes as a lie. Well, let him yield to what he cannot mend, and pass on with an inward protest. But, alas! when is this to stop? He will soon have his whole life an inward protest. But what if he does *outwardly* protest against loose language, against low principles, such as money-loving, rank-loving, and the like? Suppose him to say, 'I dare not take six hundred a month, because I am sufficiently tempted to sins of omission with four hundred.' Suppose him, I say, to utter such a sentence, some Monday morning, why he really says nothing more than the good world has been complacently hearing as God's truth the day before, from the Rev. Mr. Commonplace, but is yet, because he says it on the wrong day, (there is a time for all things, says the world, piously quoting Ecclesiastes,) anathematized as a methodistical humbug, — probably as an inconsistent hypocrite into the bargain; or if he gets to some of the world's very particular weaknesses, — if he ventures to say, 'It is not good to resent an affront, — it is good to bear one,' and so allows some overbearing blackguard to say an insolent thing, he is at once excommunicated as polluted with the deadly sin. My idea of a soldier is — and I think you will allow it is the true idea — a Christian, a man, a gentleman, — graduating downwards, but including all three. Society, unhappily, differs so far as to this idea, as to insist upon the gentleman, be rather particular about the man, and consider the Christian a little superfluous, in fact, rather a bore than otherwise. I cannot at all give in to society; I really dare not do it, because I believe it will be the worse for me if I do, fifty years hence, when my gentlemanliness will probably be worn out, and my manhood with it; but what am I to do if I cannot persuade society to give in to me either? Here I come round again, you see, to the beginning of the circle, and only restate the problem. Forgive my thus troubling you with what can hardly be of interest

to you; it is the consequence of solitude that one inflicts long outpourings upon one's correspondents. Good by, and believe me,

"Yours, affectionately,

"E. Oakfield."

However harsh the judgment pronounced, perhaps too hastily, in the beginning of this letter, it is hardly more so than that passed by most thinking men, in the first shock which they encounter from Anglo-Indian society. In many cases the strong sense of indignation and disgust becomes blighted by habit; or redeeming points appear which had been lost sight of in the first dismayed glance. But certainly the first experiences of Indian society are, to most, disappointing, and often shocking; and often lead, for a time, to that complete seclusion which Oakfield at first adopted. But there are few men, especially young men, who can make up their minds to a lifetime of complete seclusion; and Oakfield, after trying it for two months, began to be alarmed at the morbid, moody temper which he felt to be gaining on him. To sit by and condemn, is an easy, but a dangerous habit; and he determined once more to try the experiment of joining, at least partially, in society; resolved, however, at once to quit, if he found himself again beginning to give in to its falsehoods, to the injury of his own sense of truth.

There was a young ensign, belonging to the regiment with which he was doing duty, whom he had, from the first, felt more interested in than any other of the officers.

Ensign Arthur Vernon had been in India about a year, but was four years younger than Oakfield. Brought up at home, he was sent forth over the threshold of life, at the critical age of seventeen, to make his way with such helps as he could find. His handsome, but delicate, countenance had first attracted Oakfield's attention, among the coarse, prematurely old faces of his companions; and the favorable

impression always made by a handsome countenance, especially in a boy or very young man, was confirmed by the courtesy with which he had invited the new-comer to take up his quarters together with him and his friend Lieutenant Cade. The offer was first made when Oakfield's fit of dismay, at the set in which he found himself, was at its height; and he had declined it; young Vernon, however, had repeated it from time to time, and Oakfield's conscience reproached him for having refused. "After all," he thought, "that poor boy may be as dissatisfied as I am with his companions; one year in India has not destroyed the beauty of his face nor the boyish gentlemanliness of his manner. I dare say he 's a very good fellow, and perhaps while giving in, in appearance, to the force of things around him, just as I did at Oxford, has as little real sympathy with them." So the next day, as they were returning from parade, Oakfield rode up to Vernon, and said, to his surprise, "Vernon, have you still room for me in your quarters, if I ask leave to change my mind, and accept the kind invitation you gave me some time ago to chum with you?"

"O, of course; I shall be delighted; come over now, and have a cup of tea, and look at the bungalow."

"Thank you: you do n't think Cade will think three too many; I should n't like to come where I was n't wanted, you know."

"Cade? O no: he wants to get a third man very much; he told me to ask you when you first came."

"O, did he?" said Oakfield, rather disappointed. "I 'm sure I 'm much obliged to him."

"Why," said the other, "I don't know that you need be; I believe — happy, of course, as he 'll be to see you — that his principal wish was to pay thirty rupees a month house-rent, instead of fifty: but I assure you," he added, in a more natural tone, "that I shall be very glad indeed if you

'll join us; I was so sorry that you left the mess, though, after all," and he blushed as he spoke, "I did n't wonder at it." There was a boyish frankness about this last sentence which put Oakfield completely at his ease again; for, to say the truth, the thought of being solicited to live with a man for the sake of lowering the shares of house-rent had not altogether pleased him.

They had by this time reached the bungalow. It was certainly too large a house for two bachelor subalterns, and had comfortable room for three; and had the advantage also of a large compound.

"We have these two sitting-rooms, you see," said young Vernon; "and here 's my room. Cade has his room on that side; and into this, in which Cade generally sits in the day-time, you, I hope, will send your things in the course of the day."

"Why I would rather, I think, let your chum know first."

"What 's the good? he won't be back till the end of the month, and will, I tell you, be only too happy to find you established. Just stay here and breakfast, and send for your things, that 's a good fellow."

So Oakfield very willingly allowed himself to be persuaded: and being, even in two months, infected with that spirit of locomotion which makes change of house or station so ordinary and unexciting an event to an Indian, send word to his bearer to bring his things over to Cade Sahib's bungalow, and sat down to breakfast with his new chum.

"Cade will be back at the end of the month, you say," Oakfield began, still harping upon his unseen fellow-lodger.

"Yes; he must be present at muster: you have never seen him, I think?"

"No; he went on leave just before I joined."

"He 's a very good sort of fellow is Cade," said Vernon, volunteering what Oakfield hardly liked to ask. "As good

a hearted fellow as ever lived." The commendation was not altogether satisfactory; for Oakfield knew what a multitude of blackguardism was often included under the vague title of a "good-hearted fellow."

"Have you lived with him long?" he asked.

"Ever since I joined the corps; we get on very well together, and he 'd be a capital chum if he was only a little more regular in paying the rent."

"A defect, certainly: does he often omit to pay?"

"He must owe, I should think, nearly a year's rent now; —I 'm half afraid of their being down upon me for it."

"Why, you do n't mean to say that he 'd allow you to pay his house-rent?" said Oakfield, with very griffish surprise.

"O, I do n't suppose he 'd look at it in that light; he says himself he 'd pay if he could; but, poor fellow, he only gets fifty rupees a month, and you can't expect a man to be very regular in his payments upon that."

"Only fifty rupees!" exclaimed Oakfield, still more griffishly. "Where does the other two hundred and fifty go? He has a company, I suppose?"

"Cade? O, of course; he 's fourth lieutenant; why, he 's cut two hundred and fifty a month by an infernal bank: is n't it shame?"

"Yes, it is indeed," answered Oakfield, with somewhat dishonest vagueness; "a very great shame; but I say, Vernon, suppose, as you say, they do come down upon you for this three hundred and sixty rupees, what shall you do?"

"O, I do n't know; go into the banks, I suppose. I think it does me immense credit having kept out of them so long."

It was easy to see that the indifferent tone was a mere manner of recent growth; it was easy and very sad to detect the paint of sham manliness, clumsily daubed over a truer instinct of honesty and a genuine manly shame. Oakfield saw it, and would have given much to be able to

show his companion how needless the superficial disguise was, how ready he was to sympathize with him; not with his assumed bravado, but his true self, which still lay beneath it, though wearing out, it might be, from continued sepulture. But his reserve prevented him from speaking out; perhaps some remnant of the wretched Oxford etiquette, which he had almost insensibly acquired, prevented him from taking the frank, honest tone which is so much more safe, and gives offence so much more rarely than most young men are disposed to believe. But though he thus lost the first opportunity that offered itself to break down the barrier of an assumed heartlessness between himself and his friend, yet this, their first conversation, tended greatly to confirm him in his hope, that when it was broken down they should find much in which to sympathize. Arthur Vernon was one of many who come out to India at sixteen, with no better fortification than a home education may have given them. He had perhaps an advantage in a delicacy of mind, as well as person, far greater than that of most boys and young men, but his gentle character was wanting in that stern discrimination between good and evil, and strong, though perhaps unequal resolution, which is given either by rare natural endowment, or education, or sorrowful experience. The open immorality of Indian bachelors' society had at first grieved and shocked him; even now, after a year's tolerance of it, he was far from taking pleasure in it; but in all men, and especially in the very young, the desire to be liked is strong, and he had been impelled by this desire to appear to take interest in things he cared little or nothing about; to suppress the interest which he really felt; to hear, first silently, then approvingly, lastly, himself give utterance to, sentiments which he did not believe in, which his conscience vaguely condemned, trying to satisfy himself the while by not joining in the

actual vice, either of word or deed. But he soon found that there are inevitable penalties attached to disobeying even the vague bidding of conscience. Brought up in a religious family, he could not but feel at times that the religious element of his life was gone, or fast going. He was grieved to find that, though he himself did not talk like a ruffian, his presence was no restraint upon those who did; he knew that he was living with bad men, and saw that they thought him no better than themselves, but only more *griffish*. And in this predicament he was really to be pitied. He found himself claimed as a companion, with a rough good nature, by the society of which he was a member; a good-natured recognition as an equal, by older persons, is very seductive to a boy; he could not reject their kindness altogether, and so he went on with them, utterly incapable of exercising influence over them, and therefore, of necessity, being influenced by them; till, from dwelling continually on their subjects, hearing continually their principles asserted without contradiction, and being forced, for mere companionship's sake, at least to appear to take interest in their excitements, he soon lost hold of whatever feeble clew he might once have had to an inner, independent life; grew daily more reconciled to the wretchedly narrow sphere in which he found himself, and began to think that the prospect of dragging out life in eating, drinking, smoking, billiard-playing, riding, and cantonment gossip, was not intolerable. With no strong natural insight, — with no wise (though a tender and loving) education, to enable him to withstand the ever-present influence of his daily life, — what wonder is it that this poor boy's standard of good dwindled more and more to the level of that which surrounded him? — that while his taste, early associations, and correspondence with home, kept him from being a blackguard, he became daily more content to do and to think

as others did and thought, — was continually less shocked even by the grossness which at first had so offended him, and, for the rest, was learning to look upon gentlemanliness (in the Anglo-Indian acceptation of the term) and good-fellowship as the idea of life? One counteracting influence there still was, and this was his correspondence with home, which, thanks to the blessing of the overland communication, was sufficiently frequent to make itself more or less felt continually. But as if the Indian Satanas knew the harm which his cause sustained from this influence, Vernon soon found that his home-feeling must be kept to himself; that any expression of the tenderness and deep happiness afforded by each arrival of overland letters was received with indifference, if not with contempt and ridicule. But on this point he had not given in; and though Cade had more than once "chaffed" him upon the formidable packets which he despatched every fortnight, he still wrote fully and regularly. In this state he was when Oakfield joined the regiment, to whom he was from the first forcibly attracted. There is, in the first place, a general disposition amongst Indians to welcome a fresh arrival from England; partly because, in an unchanging community, a new face is an excitement in a small way, partly because those who are groaning in dreary limbo receive with grim satisfaction another unfortunate driven from England, the Elysian fields of exiled imagination; and this feeling is strong in proportion to the shortness of each man's own banishment, — the griff of a month feeling it most, — the veteran of thirty years' standing, hardly at all. But besides this there was a gentlemanly quiet in Oakfield's manner, and in his appearance a gentlemanly determination, which had a natural charm for poor Vernon, who at times felt painfully conscious of his own weakness. He observed Oakfield's scarcely disguised amazement at the mess-table conversation, and

recollected painfully the shock which he himself, now so callous, had felt only a year before; and when Oakfield withdrew from the mess, Vernon was perhaps the only one who at once divined his reason, and asked himself whether he ought not to have done the same long ago. And yet, when some of the officers (who had no conception of the real reason of Oakfield's leaving the mess, but attributed it to economy, or, as they would say, stinginess) held forth upon the duty of supporting regimental institutions, — the degeneracy of the griffs of the present day, — the slowness of the particular griff in question; and concluded with "You 're not such a muff, Vernon, my boy, are you?" he actually felt pleased, and acknowledged that "it certainly was rather an odd thing, for a man to leave the mess only a fortnight after joining it." But, though he said so, he really admired, and half envied, the resolution which he felt it must require to take a step so little likely to be popular, and was more than ever inclined to see more of Oakfield. A few days after Oakfield had moved into his new quarters, Cade returned from leave. Cade was a great man in the eyes of the regiment, — greater still in those of his chum, — greatest of all in his own. He was a stout, not very tall, red-faced, curly-haired man; overbearing in his manner, and therefore, as is the case with most overbearing men, generally having his own way; a good-natured fellow, everybody said, — so he was, good-natured enough when he had no temptation to be otherwise, as perhaps all men are, — but ignorant, coarse, and selfish. He was a specimen of a class, unhappily too common in India; he rode hard, swore hard, — in short, in his own language, lived hard. His conversation was a mixture of commercial sportsmanship, if we may thus express racing, shooting, and betting, all considered and studied as a trade, — a means of making money, — and ribaldry the most appalling.

Yorkshiremen, it is said, consider swindling venial in matters of horse-flesh, but the Cades of this world take a far more liberal range. It is to be doubted, indeed, whether any robbery, except actually picking pockets, would be disapproved by them. To stick a brother officer, not only with a horse, but with any thing, — to clear out a griff at cards or billiards, — to get credit to the largest possible amount from the greatest possible number of tradesmen, without the slightest intention of any payment, present or future, except under compulsion, — to get money from relations at home under false pretences, — to sponge upon a friend who, perhaps, could ill afford it; — these were the clever dodges which men of the world learnt by their experience; — these were the signs of a state from which all griffinism (which comprises the seven deadly sins) had been eradicated. These were practices not carried on by stealth and scouted if discovered, but proclaimed, boasted of, universally tolerated, if not even, to a considerable extent, applauded. If all this is villany, then Cade was a villain; and if Cade was a villain, there were a good many more besides him in the service. Vernon had felt a great deal too grateful upon first acquaintance for good nature, which cost Cade nothing. Cade asked him to come and live with him, because he wanted to have somebody to share his house-rent, perhaps with some remote intention of victimizing him. In this second view, if he entertained it, he was disappointed; Vernon did not play, and would not: and there are enough willing pigeons in India, without a man taking much pains to lure the unwilling. Vernon was no fool, and he soon found out that he did not owe much gratitude to his chum; but still, as he said, they got on very well together. At first, when Cade wanted to sell a pony, he was intensely polite: after he had effected his object, and got one hundred rupees for what he knew to be barely worth forty, he was

still roughly civil; sometimes indeed grew quite cordial while comparing, with infinite complacency, his own knowingness with his chum's griffishness; of course he had entirely his own way as to the distribution of rooms and so on; but this Vernon took as a matter of course, and so they jogged on, as most in similar circumstances do, seeing a great deal of each other, but really knowing little and caring less. Vernon knew nothing of Cade's chief companions, and was ignorant of some of his worst delinquencies; he knew that he swore and got drunk very immoderately, but nobody seemed to think there was much harm in this; he knew him to be over head and ears in debt, but everybody regarded this either as a joke or a subject of condolence: and so, as they never quarrelled, he pronounced him to be a very good-hearted fellow, though a little wild, which was the general opinion; and Cade, on the other hand, declared Vernon to be a good enough sort of chap to live with, but a damned griff.

From what Oakfield had seen of the other officers of the regiment, as well as what he had heard from Vernon, he was not prepared altogether to admire Lieutenant Cade; nor was the first greeting with that personage — when he rode in from a long dark journey, and at seven in the morning called for brandy and water, and, after a slight bow to Oakfield, turned to Vernon, and told him, with an oath at every third word, of the tremendous pace he had ridden at, how nobody else could have come so fast, and, indeed, how mighty a rider he was — calculated to give a very favorable impression. When the morning lounge and bathe were over, and the three sat down to the Indian breakfast of fish, eggs, and rice, Cade considered it time to commence operations upon the new griff. He had not studied his appearance, nor did he gain any information from his self-possessed manner. There are men who are so indifferent to a repulse, that they

take no pains to guard against it beforehand by choosing their ground.

Thus Cade saw in Oakfield nothing but a griff, old-looking perhaps, but still a griff, and as such fair game. Cade was not indeed much older himself, but he had come out at sixteen, and had entirely lost sight of all standard of measurement save and except that of seniority; a weakness certainly, but not an uncommon one, in the self-complacent East. He did not mean to take a patronizing tone, but he could not for the life of him have avoided doing so. Vernon, who felt, though he would have hardly allowed, that there was a great difference between himself and Oakfield, and that the latter might be inclined to resent a manner which he, though so used to it, still distinctly perceived to be full of assumption, was quite uncomfortable when Cade broke out in the sublimest Cadian tone, —

"You came up about a month ago, I think?"

"Rather more, — nearly three months."

"O, three months! — I beg your pardon: well, and how do you like India?"

"O, rather hot."

"Hot! by G—, I should think it was, — hot as hell."

Having given this specimen of gratuitous objurgation, we shall not feel bound in future always to introduce the superfluities of Mr. Cade's conversation; though, without doing so, it is impossible to do it justice; indeed, with the oaths and blasphemy taken out, there was little but monosyllables left. The catechising was resumed: —

"What company are you in?"

"No. 1."

"Ha, — I wish you were in No. 4, I like having a subaltern; d— shame it is never giving me a subaltern. Like drill?"

"I don't dislike it much now; the goose-step was not lively."

"Ah, they do n't give griffs half enough of it now-a-days; by Jove, sir, when I was a griff," — and thereupon he went off into a disquisition which may easily be imagined, on the hardships he had undergone when he learnt his drill, and the great prowess which thereby he had attained to. Softened by the contemplation of his own excellence, he said to Oakfield, "Come over and have a game of billiards, — I 'll drive you over."

"Thank you, I should be very happy, but I 've got overland letters to write."

"O, my G—, another overland writing griff! why, what the devil do you manage to find to write about?" "By Jove, sir," he continued, "I wrote once to my old screw of a governor to ask him to pay my debts; he wrote back in a devil of a way, asking why I got into debt, and he would n't pay: and, by George, it will be a blazes long time before I write to him again. No good asking you to come, Vernon, and, besides, you can't play a damn."

"A little rough in his manner," Vernon said, apologetically, when Cade was gone, — "but I assure you he 's not a bad sort of fellow. He 's liked in the corps pretty well; and as to talking, why you know men in the army always do swear more or less."

"A hundred years ago perhaps most of them did, — though I doubt whether it was quite in that style; but what disgusted me was the way he spoke of his father, and so on."

"Well, there again men say a good deal more than they mean."

"But what earthly object can a man have in saying that his father is a screw, whether he means it or not? The only motive he can have, is a wretched notion of its being unmanly — griffish I suppose your friend Cade would call it — to appear to care for home; just as fellows at school sometimes do: it is bad enough in them, but it becomes an

awful thing in a man. I certainly do n't admire Cade for that."

"I do n't think he 's worse than a good many others in this respect," repeated Vernon, hesitatingly.

"Then I 'm afraid I should n't like a good many others."

"O, my dear fellow," said Vernon, in his turn assuming the man of practical experience, "it 's very easy to talk, but depend upon it you 'll find in a year or so that you 'll have to put up with these kind of men, and won't care much about it either; I was disgusted myself at first."

"At what?" interrupted Oakfield.

"O, at the swearing, and the loose conversation, and all the rest of it."

"But do you feel glad to have become reconciled to it?"

"Why, what is one to do?" cried the other, coloring rather, and evading the question. "I should n't like to talk like that myself; but one can't go preaching to every man who swears in one's presence."

"But are there no men in the regiment who talk differently; none, in short, who are not beasts?"

"I say, Oakfield, that 's rather strong, you know."

"Well, well, I beg your pardon; but I do feel strongly when I think of seven or eight officers and gentlemen talking as I heard them doing at your mess, when I belonged to it, and as Cade was just now; it 's so wretchedly blackguard, — so absolutely the reverse of gentlemanly, to say nothing else. But as I was saying, are there no other men besides these?"

"O, there are some of the married captains, but I see nothing of them."

"None amongst the bachelors?"

"There 's Abbot, the adjutant, he does n't go on as those men do certainly, but he 's just on the same footing with them that I am: the only difference is, that he is adjutant, and high up in the regiment, and I am junior ensign."

"Nobody else? What kind of a man is the quarter-master?"

"What, Jerrold? O, he's a native, you know; never stirs out; stays at home and smokes a hookah all day; and so there's only Empson."

"Well, what kind of a man is Empson? He's that white-haired, sickly-looking fellow, is not he?"

"Yes; senior ensign, — been out three years; well, you know, that fellow is a complete Methodist, — goes to the Dissenting chapel here every evening. I don't know that he ever speaks to any one in the regiment. All the rest are the fellows in the mess."

"Rather a gloomy prospect for you certainly: do you ever think of exchanging?"

"Not I; — always stick to the corps you're posted to. But are you going to write your overlanders this morning, because I must? I certainly do agree with you as to the way men talk of home," he added, as he sat down to write; "do you care very much about the overlands?"

"I do n't think I could live in this country without them."

"By Jove! I'm glad of that; where do you come from?"

"Cumberland; were you ever in the Lakes?"

"No, I'm a Suffolk walla. Do you know Yoxton?"

"Can't say I do."

"Such a jolly place; first-rate shooting, and beautiful country, with the coast five miles off. O, what would not I give to be there now!" The softening influence began to work; the hard-mannerism which had been so obvious while talking of his present, vanished before the gentle recollection of the different past; the enthusiasm which home can inspire, even for the dulness of Suffolk, was in his tone; poor nature, so far banished from his daily life, might be almost seen stealing over his face, as he gave way to the thought of his mother and sisters; he felt a glowing kindliness towards

Oakfield, who had sympathized with him in his one great pure pleasure; he had found at least one in whose opinion, even though the opinion of a griff, he felt, he knew not why, a strange confidence; who was not ashamed to say that he cared for his home, and thought overland letters the greatest pleasure in life. He sat down and wrote a long letter, describing to his mother his new chum. Oh! so wonderfully unlike his conversation an hour before was the tone of his letter, speaking with open, frank, boyish enthusiasm of Oakfield's good looks, of his manliness, and how different he was from the other officers; and yet that night he was listening like a disciple to Cade, and did not say a word when Oakfield was declared to be a "supercilious griff, who thought a devil of a deal too much of himself on the strength of his whiskers."

Meanwhile Oakfield was much impressed by this short conversation; he felt great pity for poor Vernon, left so entirely without support; without, as it seemed, any choice of companions, to make his way through life from evil to good; and though he felt little able to help others while so much in need of help himself, he yet determined, so long as he remained in the 81st, to do what he could to assist Vernon, to recall him, if possible, to that truer sense of right and wrong, which was becoming obliterated by the low standard of all around him. And for himself, the companionship of one who had still something of the freshness and simplicity of boyhood, so long retained by those who are brought up at home, would be, he felt sure, softening and humanizing; unable indeed to supply all the want he felt, to aid him in reconciling the difference between his faith and his circumstances, which so perplexed him; but drawing him out of himself, and dissipating that cloud of morbid self-torment which so often settles upon a solitary man. The first common chord struck between them was home; poor Arthur

became a child while unbosoming himself to his ready listener, about his mother and two little sisters; and, above all, about the pet of the family, — Alfred, his youngest brother. Then Oakfield would speak of his own home, and would lament, as he looked over the dull, dusky, hazy plain, for his lake and mountains; and sometimes when in the rains the Ganges rolled down two miles in breadth, the two would stand in the dark evening, before going home to their late dinner, to admire the one beautiful sight which their dull world afforded, — dark moving water; sometimes, after a storm, rushing down with a roar and a volume awful to see and hear; at others, the dark water, stretching out beyond the horizon, would make them fancy they were by the seashore; and sometimes, when the moon was struggling with the clouds, and the great Ganges broke and rippled in the silvery light, Oakfield would be reminded of his own beloved Thirlwater. The Ganges was their great friend; they rode by its banks in the morning, walked by it in the evening, or sometimes sailed on it, although native boat-building was not encouraging to a love of aquatics. Vernon withdrew more and more, almost unconsciously, from the intimacies into which he had as unconsciously grown. He still belonged to the mess, but he found the conversations, which he had so long listened to with indifference, becoming more painful to him, as they had been at first; the struggle to hold his own against the torrent of thoughtlessness and wickedness which swept by him, which had almost subsided into acquiescence, began to revive. There was nothing extraordinary in this: it was but the result of allowing the better and softer part of his nature sometimes to express themselves, not to die by continual suppression. Alas for the many in whom they do thus die! Alas for those who year by year come from home to India without even the experience of school or college life to assist them, are thrown into society, to the evil

and low-principled tone of which no school or college furnishes a parallel; and, borne down, not only by the weight of superior age, but of military seniority, force back all ebullitions of tender feeling, learn to be ashamed of affection, ashamed of industry, ashamed of common honesty in money matters, ashamed even of professional duty, ashamed of all that is softening, strengthening, humanizing, till all that is noble in them shrinks and withers before the overbearing, coarse, animal, worldly existence which they obey; — which they obey till it enslaves them; and the boy of seventeen who suppressed love's workings, becomes the man of five-and-twenty who has no such workings to suppress: alas for the many, the chords of whose finer nature grow dumb from long silence, who never meet a friendly hand to strike them into life again!

CHAPTER IV.

" 'Look !' cries the world, 'so many rages lulled,
So many fiery spirits quite cooled down ;
Look how so many valors, long undulled,
After short commerce with me, fear my frown.
Thou, too, when thou against my crimes wouldst cry,
Let thy foreboded homage check thy tongue.'
The world speaks well : yet might her foe reply,
'Are wills so weak? then let not mine wait long.
Hast thou so rare a poison ? let me be
Keener to slay thee, lest thou poison me.' "

Empedocles on Etna, and other Poems, by A.

Oakfield was thoroughly glad that he had deserted his solitude ; he liked Vernon more and more, and could not but feel happily conscious of the good influence he exercised over him, by recalling him to himself, and inducing him to believe that there was another standard of right and wrong, honor and dishonor, than that of his brother officers. Cade was rather a bore at times, when he brought his friends over from the billiard-table to smoke, and drink brandy and water, and talk filthily in the veranda ; on these occasions he always retreated to his own room, or would go over to play billiards with Vernon. He had some difficulty as to his dealings with the Cade set, but much less than he would have had, had he belonged to the mess. Indeed, it must be allowed to Indian regimental blackguardism, that it is generally too indolent to proselytize ; its tyranny is felt by those who make no effort to resist, but it is generally content to

let quite alone those who do; so Oakfield was on perfectly civil terms with all the officers; talked with them when they met on parade and other public places, and otherwise saw very little of them. Not belonging to the regiment, it was much easier for him to keep aloof from company he was not inclined for, than for poor Vernon to break from it, though becoming every day more anxious to do so.

"Do you think, Oakfield, I ought to leave the mess?" Vernon asked one morning, as they were riding together along the river bank.

"I think it is a very hard matter to decide," said the other; "it was easy enough for me, because I do not belong to the corps, but in your case it is very different; a man certainly owes something to the regiment, and is under a *primâ facie* obligation to support its institutions, especially the most important one, the mess; but there are other obligations which quite outweigh this; you see a man can do no possible good by going and living by himself, and if he thinks he may possibly in course of time make things better by mixing freely in society, he ought perhaps to do so; unless he feels that it is certainly doing him more harm than he can ever hope to do it good; in that case he should of course quit it at once and entirely, which after all is not very difficult."

"Then why did you quit it, Oakfield? were you afraid of its doing you harm?"

"Why no; it seemed too disgusting to have much power of corruption in it; but I tell you, — being merely attached to the regiment for a few months, I felt at liberty to follow my own inclinations, which were to live quite by myself. Had I stayed in the mess, however, if I had felt myself becoming less sensitive, I should certainly have concluded that I was becoming contaminated, and, for my own safety's sake, have left it. But as to you, I wonder you

make up your mind to stay in the regiment at all. Exchanging would be, I should fancy, the simplest way of settling the difficulty. There can't be many corps, saving your presence, like the 81st."

"Why, Oakfield, I have thought of it; but it 's so awfully expensive, you see, going to another station and beginning all over again, paying new donations and so on; and after all, perhaps I might find other difficulties there as great or greater than I do here."

"That 's very true; I believe you are right; and that I am too ready to look for relief to a change of circumstances. We sha'n't find any circumstance, I dare say, where it will be easy to do our duty; but still it is fearfully difficult here. Do you ever look forward, Vernon, and think what you are to do in after life?"

"I look forward to going home, I believe, more than anything else," he answered, laughing.

"Well, well, so do I too, but what are we to do till then? march guards off?"

"Why not get an appointment?"

"Do you think that would be much of an improvement?"

"Why, everybody says so, at home as well as in this country?"

"I don't think that is sufficient recommendation; people at home know, I suspect, very little about the matter; and both at home and in this country they think a great deal more of allowances, and position, and so on, than anything else. But as to the duty we were talking of just now, do you think we should find that much easier on the staff than we do here; or might n't we, as you said yourself, find difficulties there as great or greater than our present ones?"

"I dare say you would, but people don't generally consider an appointment in connection with duty, and that kind of thing."

"No, I believe you, they do not; because to most men the great objects in life are money or rank; and they call that position good in which they get much, and that bad in which they get little of these; but if I believe that the great object in life is to serve God, I shall think that position the best where I can most easily and most effectually do so, — and I say, is it easier on the staff than with a regiment?"

"Well, really, Oakfield, you must allow me to say that 's a very original way of thinking of an appointment."

"Scarcely original; the New Testament, at least, has been before me; I know that to exclude the New Testament entirely from one's worldly affairs is the practice of the world, but this is what, please God, I will not do."

"You will have to live like Empson then, all by yourself, and keep separate from the world altogether."

"Possibly; and if the worst comes to the worst, so it must be, but I hope otherwise as yet. I hope to live in the world, because I think we ought to do so. I doubt not Empson is a far better man than I am, but you see he does no good, and gets harm, I fear, by separation from, just as others do in a different way by intimacy with, common society; I called on him the other day after hearing your description, but I fear we could not get on."

"Why not? he 's not a very lively fellow certainly, but if you want a good man — "

"My dear Vernon, yes; I want a good man; but I want a hearty, and a kindly, and a sensible man. Poor Empson would drag all the world away to religion, instead of bringing religion into the world. I had no more interest or sympathy in his conversation than in Cade's."

"O Oakfield!"

"I had n't, I assure you; he began telling me about some Exeter Hall meeting, and how some speaker had exposed

some Puseyite clergyman, or something of that kind; and talked with great interest of the conflicts of different sects, and of the gradual triumph of Exeter Hall; all which is not so gross, but just as dull, and I think as unprofitable, every bit, as Cade's discourses on his own performances."

"Did you tell him so?"

"I did n't hurt his feelings, I hope; I certainly did not pretend to take any great interest in the subject, and I fear he thought me little better than one of the wicked: no, Arthur, if I were to live a retired life apart from men, I should prefer the old Roman Catholic line of saintliness, as more attractive, and certainly more saintly, than what is, I fear, too often an almost fanatical partisanship; but my hope, my ambition is, to combine with a service of God predominant to all besides, manifest and uncompromising, a genial activity and a kindly intercourse with society. And to find a position in which to carry out this idea should be one's object, I think, in selecting a profession."

"Was it this, then, that made you come to India, because it was a queer place to fix upon?"

"You are chaffing, Master Arthur, and perhaps you have good reason; I sha'n't answer that question; — the question now is, being in India, what to do?"

"Get out of it again."

"Many a true word spoken in jest, youngster: I think I shall get out of it."

"Nonsense, Oakfield, you 're not serious."

"Only half," said the other; "what do you say to coming to New Zealand, and cutting the service?"

By this time they had regained cantonments, and inquired at the post-office for letters.

"By Jove! here 's one from Stanton," exclaimed Oakfield. "Come along, Arthur, let 's get home." So they galloped off.

Stanton's letter was as follows: —

"My dear Oakfield: —

"I was not the least surprised when I received your philippic; I had expected it. I grant that the first feeling of a thoughtful, nay, of a gentlemanly man, thrown into Indian bachelor, military society, is likely to be disgust, — but this cannot last. It is neither possible, nor at all desirable, to be living all one's days in a state of abhorrence from what is passing round us; we must round our corners off somehow to fit into the state of things which we find, and which all our angularity will not alter. Now don't fly off and say that is low-principled, and an unworthy accommodation with evil; *experto crede*, or if you won't trust, at least hear. I have been more or less a solitary being ever since I was born. I had no brothers and sisters, so I grew up at first alone; and then I was at Eton what is called in a boy, shy; quietly jogged on my own ways, as a great many in a large school do, neither bullied nor petted, but just let alone; indeed, came far less in contact with other fellows there than many, with their queer notions of public schools, would think possible. It was the same at Addiscombe.* I have, as you know, somewhat a phlegmatic disposition, which happily preserved me from the abominations of that abominable place; I knew one or two quiet men, and I know them in this country now. We read fairly and got the artillery, owing nothing to Addiscombe, which is a place we all hate cordially, but then we were all public school men. When I came out here, I might have had society enough if I had liked it, and that far more attractive than what you describe at Hajeepoor. The Dum Dum mess is pretty much what you say you expected to find every mess; and the artillery, especially the mounted branch, is, I honestly think, the best arm in the service for officers. But I did not seek society, still less did it seek me; neither, however, did I avoid it. My principal interests were certainly altogether independent of it, but I did not feel called upon to wage war with it. I was, as I am, immensely fond of riding, but had not the least predilection

* Addiscombe has the credit, we believe deservedly, of being an altered place since Stanton wrote.

for the turf; and though a sportsman by taste and home training, I did not fall in with the gambling, drinking, buying, and selling lot, who called themselves by that name. In fact, I lived very much alone, because I had been used to do so, on very civil terms with all the society of the place; but seeing little of it, and to tell you the truth, thinking very little whether it was good or bad. All this time you must recollect I was a mere boy. As I grew older, I certainly wished to find at least one or two personal friends, but *Dis aliter visum:* one grows up with or stumbles upon a friend, does not find him out by searching. Till I came out this time, and made your acquaintance, I had not a friend in the country. Of course I did not like India, nobody does. People who ship their sons off to India every day, little think to what a blighted life they are sending them. I have always a profound pity for a griff; I am sure most of them are miserable; that the quantity of silent sorrow which they gulp down in that first year is very pitiable. It makes them men, but what kind of men we will not say. God help the present generation of them! — not that I was actually wretched, but only not at all happy: with all my sensations in that respect humbled. So it is with almost all; it is the curse of this country, brought on very considerably by climate, partly also by other causes. The hot dull vacancy of Indian life is grievous to all. Men try to evade it in many ways, — some by the excitement of work, and these are perhaps best off; and yet you would call them active or useful, or perhaps brilliant, rather than happy. Sometimes they are good men, but, with very few exceptions, too feverish-minded to be happy. Others, by the excitement of drink, — poor feeble ones! deserving not of less contempt, but of more pity than they get; — these quickly hurry through their half-hours of ecstasy and weeks of awful despondency, to delirium tremens and the burying-ground. But far the greatest number seek relief in the petty dissipations of society; these are the men who drink, but are not drunkards, — bet and play cards and billiards, but do not gamble ruinously; and eat and drink and sleep and gossip and shilly-shally through their day; trying, with all the singleness of purpose they possess, to steer a dexterous course between the burden of exertion on the one hand, and the vacuum of literally doing

nothing on the other. This is the great bulk of Indian society, — more or less vicious at different times and places (you appear to have found an unfavorable specimen), but always shallow, empty, contemptible. I had sense enough to perceive that the remedies people tried against dulness were worse than the disease; the first, indeed, I have had no opportunity of trying; my interest got me into the horse artillery and stopped. I think I should like regular work, though I should certainly dread the bustle and disquiet with which I see it generally accompanied. But still the disease is painful, and, as I tell you, a life of perpetual dulness, without the pleasing safe excitement of friendly intercourse, deadens one's happy sensibilities. The more my mind ripened, the more it was driven in upon itself. The civil, indifferent footing with other men upon which I found myself by habit and natural temperament, corresponded well enough with my wakening sense of my position in life. It was clear that my lot was to be a solitary one, that the line of my duties would give me no standing-ground from which to influence society, and therefore I might let it alone, not protesting against evil, which I neither could nor should ever diminish; in short, taking care of myself, and leaving the world to take care of itself. This sounds selfish, but I do not think it is so really. After all, every man's first business is and must be to take care of himself; there are some who while doing this are led naturally in the line of their duty to reprove, and perhaps separate themselves from the world by a visible line of demarcation; but depend upon it, the majority of us do no good to ourselves or others by such conduct; we must do our own work, have our own interests, cultivate our own affections, only regretting that they find no immediate object; we may practically be apart from the world, — nay, we must deny it our real or professed sympathy, but we shall gain nothing, and perhaps lose much, by a flagrant breach leading to no result. So I took to books, and lived for seven years with unseen friends. I went through the ordinary duties and courtesies of life, nor do I think that this, in any way, impaired the sincerity with which I devoted myself to the safest of all pleasures, — literature; those wide Elysian fields, where you may wander on with all great and true souls, — with none to inter-

fere with you, with no mist of form or prejudice, or compromise, to stand between the theory and the practice of life. So I lived for seven years; not very happily, I tell you, because a life utterly free from excitement is not a happy one; and besides this, though thinking was, I believe, the best work open to me, we all have a consciousness that 'to do is nobler than to think.' If you see your line of action, then *do* in God's name. If you feel yourself prepared for a crusade against the interminable falseness of society, I shall bid you God speed, not the least expecting you to be successful, but believing that you will be a glorious gainer by the effort, and that perhaps the cause itself will be the stronger for a victim; but do not begin unless you are prepared to go on; to buzz about the complicated social falsehood, — accusing here, and giving in there, speaking stern truth to one lie, and trying to get over another by fair words, will only be irritating to others and perplexing to yourself. I doubt whether your ambition, nay, I candidly tell you, I doubt whether your strength and courage, will carry you to the length which can alone justify, or at least compensate for, an attack. It is superfluous to say, 'Do not join yourself to society'; but still, unless you feel prepared for an almost apostolic labor, I should say, do not altogether sever yourself from it. I dare say the Hindustanee and the appointment will not do you much good, and that you would feel as little inclined to join yourself heartily to the world in its higher, more refined and intellectual, but still worldly phrase, than to the lower one, — to regimental tittle-tattle. I agree with you that we have fallen upon evil times, in an evil land. At home, in the great question of social relationship between the higher and lower classes, and God *versus* Mammon, good and evil seem again to be declaring themselves with some distinctness, but here, unfortunately, we are all higher classes together; and Mammon has hitherto had it all his own way. Make up your mind for a dull, self-teaching life; it is grievous, I dare say, to be asked, at twenty-one, to sit down and let the battle of life be fought without you; you must fight it in your own heart, and by the time you have been ten years in India, and have become a prematurely old man of thirty, with the spring taken out of you, you will find that quite enough. I hope

to see you in a few weeks. I am ordered to join a troop at Meerut, and shall go up by steamer to Allahabad. I will let you know when I am coming.

"Ever, dear Oakfield,
"Your attached friend,
"H. STANTON."

About a month after Oakfield received this letter, he got another, telling him of the day on which his friend expected to be at Hajeepoor, by steamer. Steamers on the Ganges and the great trunk road are the two most palpable marks, we had almost said the only two, of British civilization in India, — the former especially; the steam navigation of the Ganges has been a boon, second only to that priceless one, the overland communication with England. It was at six o'clock, on a beautiful October morning, when Oakfield heard that an "agin boat" * was in sight. He rode down to the ghat with Vernon, and there sure enough he saw the "Lord William Bentinck" steamer, with the clumsy, unsightly, passenger *flat* in tow, panting up the middle of the river, seeming to make little progress against the rushing volume of water, swollen by the scarcely departed rainy season. There is little of the life and bustle of an English quay to be seen at an Indian *ghat*.† One or two anxious to catch a glimpse of some friend in his way up country; a few native merchants and agents waiting to receive their goods from Calcutta; a few landing-place native officials, with their red cloth shoulder-belts and brass breastplates, the invariable uniform of an Indian "*Chaprassey*," — these formed the whole assemblage, with the occasional exception of some officer, stopping, as he passed by, returning from his morning ride, "just to have a dekh ‡ at the steamer," the

* The natives call a steamboat "agin boat."

† The native word for a ferry, or landing-place.

‡ *Anglicè*, a look, a sight.

one mild, unexciting break in the dull round of Hajeepoor monotony. After divers shouts of "Back her," and "Stop her," and "Ease her," — queer, Thames-like cries, sounding in the Indian October morning, the steamer (a specimen of the useful in naval architecture, in its most intense opposition to the beautiful) was fastened to the bank, and in a few moments Stanton and Oakfield had shaken hands.

"Well," said the former, "you don't look much the worse for your first hot weather."

"No; indeed, I think the climate about the only evil in India which is not so bad as it is said to be."

"Ah! you 'll think differently your second season," said Vernon, with the Job's comforting superiority of a comparatively old Indian. "I 've felt it twice as much this year as I did last."

"I should n't think you had had much to complain of this year either," said Stanton, with the politeness of a five minutes' acquaintance.

"I don't know, I feel awfully seedy sometimes," replied Vernon, rather despondingly.

Stanton looked at him more attentively, and was struck with the fragile delicacy of his appearance.

"How are you travelling, Oakfield, — got a horse for me?"

"Of course: here Syce!" And so they rode home, glad to get out of the eight o'clock sun, which was painful even in October.

"You are going to stay here, I hope, Stanton, — not going on by the steamer?"

"No; I intend to inflict myself upon you, if you can put me up, till the next steamer comes up."

"Of course; you won't mind sleeping in a tent; the nights are perfectly cool now, and we can dine together in my room."

"I hope," said Vernon, "Mr. Stanton will dine with me at mess to-night; it 's a public night."

"I shall be very happy."

"Nonsense, Vernon?" Oakfield exclaimed; "you come and dine here till Stanton goes; I 'm not going to allow him to be taken away to mess the first day he 's here."

"It won't be taking him away; of course you 'll come too."

"Of course I 'll not; you know I never dine at the mess; besides, you would n't like it yourself, Stanton, I know."

"Thank you," said Stanton, smiling; "I shall be very happy to dine at the 81st's mess. O, come along, Oakfield; remember what I told you."

"I remember very well; but it 's rather a cool way of making me act upon it, whether I agree or not. No; you and Arthur go and dine at the mess. I forgive him for asking you, on condition you both let me off."

But they would not let him off; so at last he consented.

After accepting the invitation, Oakfield kept regretting the whole day that he had done so. For the last four months he had been quite exempt from the unpleasantnesses to which he was again about to expose himself.

"It 's all very well," he thought, "for Stanton to talk of the fruitlessness of objecting in one point unless I object in all; it 's not a matter of objecting; the thing is, am I bound, or have I a right, to sit still and hear in silence all that I have every reason to expect I shall hear? As to irritating people, keeping aloof from them is far less likely to do so, I should think, than going amongst them and sitting silent, and looking disgusted. And yet I cannot by possibility look otherwise if Cade comes out in the style I have sometimes heard him. I shall like to see how Stanton manages, too; and, besides, I owe something to Vernon; he has made such immense concessions already that I should n't like to appear

exacting or absurdly fastidious to him. I wonder how Stanton manages."

So he made up his mind to go and make the best of it, hoping that after all it would be better than he expected, — that the 81st would have more respect for common decency on a public night than on ordinary occasions.

Stanton, Oakfield, and Vernon rode together up the course that evening; — three men as different in appearance and in character as are often seen anywhere. Stanton, far the oldest-looking of the party, — far the most mannish in his figure, with small eyes, regular features, and placid expression, singularly placid and immovable, stolid and cold you would say till you knew him, and found what sparks of wit flashed out of that stolidity, — what a warm, loving heart lay under his absent, dreamy, speculative habit. In intensest contrast with him, young Vernon, with his bright color, — his sparkling eye, — his delicately marked features, full of life; — but, alas! full of death also; — that fragile beauty of complexion and outward comeliness, which so inevitably suggests the thought of decay and early death. Between the two rode Oakfield, looking neither old nor young; perhaps an old mind, — a mind forced into growth by education and circumstances, struggling with a young body for supremacy; his soft black hair parting almost equally on either side of his head, giving a soft tone to his smooth, earnest features, while his large dark eyes, contrasting with his pale face, gave him an appearance of almost sorrowful thoughtfulness. He led the others, they hardly knew why. It was, indeed, nothing but the force of earnestness. He had been from his childhood — rare blessing! — accustomed to find those around him in earnest; and this influence had made itself felt; and now, even in the opening of youthful manhood, he found himself closely questioning life, asking eternal reasons for what he should do in time. He was an earnest man, — and

he was a Christian man. Alas that the two should be so often severed! Alas that the long folly of those "who profess and call themselves Christians" should have done its best to divorce Christianity from wisdom! that so many true and eager hearts, seeing, as they thought, Christianity intimately leagued with sectarianism and narrow-minded dogmatism, should have thought it needful to renounce it as the first step towards freedom and truth! Alas that we should now find, to our cost, that Christianity, the new religion, the religion of all times and places, the religion beyond sects and creeds, should be in danger of confounding itself with things old and ready to vanish away, when it should be hailing as its own true offspring, lending sanctification and divine light to whatsoever things are loving, whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are true.

The evening promenade is the one event of the day to an Indian community, in the hot weather, and not a very exciting one either. The great thing is to get air, after the close confinement to the house during the weary hours of sunshine; and to see other faces than that of your wife or chum, as the case may be, which you have been shut up with all day. The first public work in a new cantonment, coeval with the barracks themselves, is the "course," or "mall," a long, ugly line of drivable road, reclaimed from the sandy wilderness, about one and a half or two miles in length; and every night of the year do the same people, at the same hour, in the same costume, riding the same horses, driving the same buggies, jog at the same pace up and down this same bit of straight road, in that business-like way which an Englishman retains in everything, even in dancing; bowing to each other as they pass the *first* time, but at each subsequent time going by with studious indifference. In the hot months the intense oppression of the atmosphere, even after sunset, combines with the dull monotony of the busi-

ness itself to impress it with a somewhat funereal aspect, which the blank, colorless costume, the white muslin dresses of the women, and white uniform jackets of the men, looking ghastly rather than cool, does not tend to relieve. But October is the blessed month of hope in India: then the morning and evening breezes begin to blow freshly, and as the days shorten, the air has time to cool before the sun comes back to heat it again; red jackets and colored dresses succeed to the universal white: the delicious intoxication of fresh air makes sombre faces cheerful, and cheerful ones merry; horses, no less than men, feel the blessed influence, and you shall see staid quadrupeds dancing and kicking that you would have sworn a week ago had not a kick in them.

"What a jolly evening!" Oakfield exclaimed; "and there 's the moon rising; I vote we cut the mess and go for a ride."

"Thank you," said Stanton; "I want my dinner, and it 's time to go there too, I fancy; there 's not a soul but ourselves on the course."

They galloped back to the mess, where a large party had already assembled, and were standing round a table in a small anteroom, talking and drinking sherry. Oakfield spoke to one or two whom he knew amongst the red-coated throng of men, all looking very like each other, with here and there the blue jacket of an artilleryman; and, more broadly distinguished still, a solitary, black-coated civilian, looking quiet and gentlemanly, — as a decently-dressed civilian in a red crowd always does.

"There 's the second bugle; come along!" shouted Cade; and the party moved bodily into the mess-room, and ranged themselves, about forty in number, down the long table, while their forty several khidmutgars rushed simultaneously at the soup.

A large dinner at a Native Infantry mess, at least in the Bengal Presidency (they manage these things better, we

are told, in Bombay and Madras), is not a beautiful sight. It would kill Soyer. The table on such occasions furnishes an exact image of the native impression as to English taste and appetite. An absurd profusion of boiled and roasted flesh is a "burra khana," great dinner. The mess-khansamah is told that there is to be a large party, and there must be a good dinner; he multiplies quantity up to his idea of good, and the result is a display of "plain roast and boiled," that would gratify any old gentleman of wholesome anti-French kickshaw taste as to quality, however it might stagger him in quantity. Those innocent people who read of mess dinners given by crack corps at home, the magnificent display of regimental plate, and so on, would stare at the miscellaneous medley of silver, german-silver, electro-plate, and crockery and glass of all sorts, sizes, and colors; for a good many messes (and the 81st was about the worst in the service) have no other property than a table, a few chairs, and a good deal of beer, — and every man sends his own plates, glasses, &c. As to company and conversation, the uninitiated would probably not expect very much, and therefore be less disappointed: it is questionable, indeed, whether the wretched, half-sporting, half-fashionable, all-silly, and consequential gossip, which Lever and other writers like him have popularized as the idea of mess conversation in the royal army, is not even more contemptible than the undisguised coarseness and hearty blackguardism of the 81st. Vernon sat in the approved host fashion, with a guest on either hand, and Oakfield was not sorry to find his neighbor on the other side the civilian. Civilians have some undeniable advantages over officers of the other service. They come out on an average three years later, mix more in women's society, and what brains they have are not allowed to lie utterly unemployed. Mr. Broke had been at Cambridge, so he and Oakfield had a little university shop; then

Oakfield asked him how he liked the country and his magisterial work. He hated the former and apparently took very little interest in the latter, — went off to Hajeepoor parties and young ladies, — spoke of these last with less coarseness, perhaps, but the same freedom, which had so horrified Oakfield in the officers of the 81st. He was, in fact, a very commonplace young gentleman, but he *was* a gentleman in appearance and manner, and Oakfield inwardly acknowledged that even this was a greater point than he would have allowed it to be six months back. Around him rose and fell the roar of 81st mess-table small talk, and those who listened might hear Smith's plucky proposal to run his notable tat* "Pickles" against Brown's hitherto unvanquished "Devil's Dust," for a mile and a half, owners up, for ten gold mohurs†; or how Walker "backed himself to drink six bottles of beer and walk home after it." While the uninitiated might gaze in speechless wonder at Cade, as he related, with all the conscious glow of good fellowship, how at the Court of Requests the previous day (before which, by the by, he had only escaped being brought as a defendant by being named as a judge) "he had stuck out like bricks for poor old Pringles of ours, and had ultimately succeeded in *doing* that damned Sadangor,‡ Nubbee Bux." So the dinner passed off, and by the time the curry and rice was disposed of, the cloth off the table, and cheroots lighted, Oakfield, who had exhausted his civilian neighbor, and who observed that Cade and Co. were getting very boisterous, was anxious to decamp.

"How long is one expected to stay?" he asked of Vernon, who had been talking busily to Stanton all dinner-time.

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* Tat, short for Tattoa; — *Anglicè*, pony.

† A gold mohur is an amount, not a coin, at least not one in circulation; it is equivalent to sixteen rupees.

‡ *Anglicè*, tradesman.

"O, not long; just wait a quarter of an hour, or so, and we 'll come with you. O, by Jove, what a bore!"

This last exclamation was caused by somebody's shouting out, "I say, Cade, give us a song."

"Not yet, not yet," Vernon said, only half aloud, and coloring violently.

"And why not yet, youngster?" asked Cade, turning sharp upon him; "have you any particular objection?"

"O no; I only thought it rather early to begin."

Cade looked angrily at him; he knew what he was afraid of, and determined that he should not be disappointed. He then looked hard at Oakfield, but could make nothing out of his face, which was perfectly undisturbed. Oakfield was really extremely uneasy; he knew of what style Cade's performance was likely to be, and he felt for poor Vernon's evident distress at having brought him into an unpleasant position.

"Upon my honor, Oakfield, I had no idea of anything of this kind; I thought we should have left long before the singing began; I am really very sorry."

"Don't distress yourself, old boy; it 's not the least your fault; you did all you could to stop it, and did it very pluckily, too, for the junior officer of the corps present. After all, I dare say Abbot there won't allow anything very gross with all these guests here."

"Abbot! bless you, he does n't care: I only hope that it will pass off, and that Cade won't sing; it 's all up if he does; I don't believe he knows two lines of anything decent. Confound it! there 's Smith asking him again, and he 'll do it, I know, because of you; I 'm very sorry, Oakfield; what shall you do? you can't go just as he begins."

"Don't you distress yourself, I tell you, my dear fellow; you attend to Stanton, I don't know what he will do; there he is, talking away, and does n't know apparently what 's

coming; but I fancy he 'll stay here, and you must stay with him; there 's no occasion for remaining, and I won't hear again what I heard once at this table; but mind, Vernon, however unpleasant this may be, I fully acknowledge you did all you possibly could to stop it."

This passed between them while the hum was still going on, lessening as Cade took counsel as to what he should sing, — giving and receiving suggestions very ominous as to what was to follow. At last he broke out, and, at the end of the first verse, Oakfield tapped Vernon quietly on the shoulder, got up, and left the room. He did it as gently as he could, but it was impossible but that it should have the appearance of a marked action. Cade stopped short, looked at Vernon, and said, with a coarse, insulting laugh, "Your friend 's gone home early, youngster," and resumed his brutality.

Poor Vernon sat on thorns, and would have given worlds to follow Oakfield. The fear which would have restrained him two months ago was completely gone; he felt angry with himself, — most unjustly, poor boy, — for having brought his friend against his will, and forced him into so unpleasant a proceeding; he himself was horrified by the hideous sounds which he could not help hearing; he would have given anything to go, but when he looked at Stanton, he saw him with his eyes cast down, looking grave, disgusted, but immovable. In the applauding hubbub that followed the close of the obscenity, there was a pretty general break-up and adjournment to the billiard-room.

"Shall we go?" said Stanton.

"I 'm quite ready; I really owe you an apology for bringing you here: I assure you I never knew such a thing occur before, at least so soon after dinner, and with guests present."

"Well," said Stanton, "I tell you candidly that I never

heard anything so bad before, and I have dined at a good many messes in my time. The seniors of your corps, who were present, must be great blackguards or great cowards. I saw how uneasy you were, and was very sorry for you; but if you once find yourself let in for a thing of that kind, the only plan is to sit still, and take the first opportunity of getting away. Master Oakfield was wrong, and I shall tell him so."

"Poor, dear Oakfield! I think he was quite right, I do declare, and I like him better than ever for it."

Stanton made no answer to this, but only told Vernon "he was a very good fellow." He himself thought no better of the business than Oakfield, though perhaps he was less acutely pained by it; but he had been long accustomed, on principle as well as in practice, to avoid in the first instance any such unpleasant circumstances, or, if he unfortunately came in the way of them, to submit in silence and get out of them as fast as he could. "I take my own way," he would say, "and the blackguards must take theirs; I shall do no good by fighting with them, so the best thing, if we come in contact, is to sheer off again the best and soonest we can." But he had far too great regard for the conscience of a young boy to urge his theory upon him; "it does very well for me," he thought, "but might only serve as a cloak of cowardice to him." Perhaps Stanton hardly knew how much cowardice in his own case, or, if not cowardice, indolence, lay hid under the guise of this philosophy, falsely so called. "Have you parade in the morning?"

"No; Oakfield and I are going out for a ride: will you come?"

"To be sure: tell your bearer, please, to call me at gunfire. Good-night."

CHAPTER V.

" How little, then,
Submission costs.
It costs no gold, no sweat
Of brow, no toil of limb. It costs the Man.
What is man without conscience? "

STRATHMORE.

IT was a delicious morning, a distinctly cool breeze, so refreshing after the graduated temperature of hot, tepid, and questionable winds; and the dawn was glorious as it stole over that cloudless sky, over the calm, cool, boundless plain, over that huge, white-sanded river. The clear fresh morning was not the time for unpleasant questions; they talked of home. Oakfield compared the present with the corresponding time a year ago, when he was going up to Oxford for his last undergraduate term, and expecting his degree examination, — whereas now he was riding by the Ganges, in Bahar, expecting his posting. Stanton tried to recollect where he must have been that time a year ago, and came to the conclusion that he must have been shooting in the Highlands.

"Well," said Vernon, "I was at Hajeepoor, and uncommonly wretched I was."

"It is a wretched time the first few months, certainly," said Stanton; "how little people at home know or care what a quantity of unhappiness is shipped off to this country every month. They talk of the Anglo-Indian Empire, and

the fortunate young lads who get into that glorious service; but they forget that a life of exile is still a life of exile, and as such, to all but the most insensible, more or less a life of pain; they forget, or do not care to know, what a tragedy almost every one of those fortunate lads goes through; tragedies not the less painful because they are for the most part dull and unexciting; and, often too, unwitnessed and unsympathized with."

"Not the less painful either," said Oakfield, "because often lying side by side with the broadest farce."

"True for you, Oakfield; and which," he added, after a pause, as if determined to bring on the subject whether it fitted or not, "which should you call last night's performance, tragedy or farce?"

"Neither," said Oakfield, gravely. "Neither impressively wicked nor coarsely amusing; but simply revolting, and nothing else."

"You are hardly qualified to judge, for you did not hear it out."

"No, I heard quite enough; come, I know what you are driving at; you want to question the propriety of what I did last night. I knew I should have to fight with you about it."

"Why yes, I certainly think you made a mistake; you gave, of course, great offence, and, as far as I see, gained nothing by it."

"I do n't see why I am bound to prove that I do gain anything by it; it is enough that I felt no obligation to remain where I was, and that it would have been very unpleasant to do so. I do not say that is my only ground; but even that I think is enough."

"Hardly," replied Stanton, "for I think there *was* an obligation. Of course to hear that man Cade, or whatever you call him, making a beast of himself, was very unpleas-

ant, as you say; but do you think you had a right to rebuke him by an open expression of disgust and disapproval? It is very lamentable that men should say or do offensive things, but if every one who did was to be reproved openly, we should be in perpetual hot water."

"You are too vague, Stanton, in your expressions; I do not the least claim the right, nor have I any desire, to rebuke every man who offends in conversation; but I consider this of Cade's as a particular case. I do not think gentlemen have any right to countenance anything so gross and so wicked even by their presence."

"No; and therefore they will do well to keep out of the way of places and persons where they know this style of thing goes on."

"I agree with you," Oakfield interrupted, "and therefore I wished, as you know, not to go to mess; but having gone, and being present, there was no alternative left me. We do little enough, God knows, in protesting against evil; I am sure we ought not to concede an inch of the ground we have: even society repudiates evil in such a gross and palpable form as that; and though I do not say that evil is more deserving of tolerance in its more refined guise, yet I do say that in whatever form it is excluded, even though on low and unworthy grounds, we are the gainers by its exclusion, and gain nothing by admitting it. Speaking to you, I would not mind saying, that I think a man is bound to mark his abhorrence of sin, especially in its worst and most loathsome shape, far more pointedly than we most of us are in the habit of doing, provided of course that it be done wisely and sincerely, not foolishly and conceitedly. But on lower grounds I consider that what I did was perfectly defensible. Even the gentlemanly standard, false as it is in many respects, and in all so far inferior to the Christian standard from which it is so unhappily divorced, does not admit of

such blackguardism as that of last night. In a party of English gentlemen at home, even of young men, I say confidently, judging from my own university experience, Cade dared not have done what he did last night, or would have been scouted with contempt and indignation had he attempted it. Of the Queen's army I am less qualified to speak; perhaps too out here the Queen's regiments become Indianized; but I don't believe that such a thing would be allowed at the mess of a good regiment, even in this service. I do trust that all corps are not like the 81st, are they?"

"No," said Stanton, "though it 's rather cool of me to say so before Vernon; but I told him last night that I never saw anything so disreputable as the whole affair: the mess, the conversation, the whole turn out was disgraceful. The Indian army is bad in this respect certainly, but I trust there are very few messes where you would see or hear anything at all like last night. If I were you, Vernon, being junior ensign, and all things considered, I should exchange."

"So I intend to: I shall wait till you are posted, Oakfield, and then apply for the first vacancy in your regiment."

"Do, old fellow," said Oakfield, "that will be very jolly; we 'll chum together."

"Well, but Oakfield, about what we were saying," Stanton began.

"No, never mind what we were saying; it 's no good discussing it; I see where we differ, and we are not likely to agree. You think it 's no good quarrelling with what we can't mend. I say I quarrel not to mend, but to take care of myself and to discharge a duty. I say at any rate, do not give evil more tether than the world, that is the respectable, shabby-genteel world, gives it. A gentlemanly standard is not much to establish or to insist upon, but it is a good deal better than nothing. But I so far agree with you that anything likely to irritate others, without doing them good, is to

be avoided, so I hope to be more careful for the future not to get into a position where to irritate becomes necessary; though I shall live for the present in hope that, having seen what you admit to be the worst possible specimen of Indian society, the next and more favorable ones will make such contingencies less likely to occur. But it 's getting hot, and, Vernon, you don't look well; let 's get home."

When they reached the bungalow, they found that Cade was, as usual, breakfasting out; this was a relief, for the meeting was sure to be awkward after what had happened, and both Oakfield and Vernon felt that it would very possibly be unpleasant for them to continue their present arrangement of chumming any longer. That night Oakfield and Stanton dined at home, but Vernon would not be persuaded to join them, but went to mess as usual. His friends were surprised, but he refused to stay so decidedly that they forbore to urge him. The fact was that Vernon, knowing how unpopular Oakfield already was, and how liberally his proceedings of the previous night were certain to be abused, — feeling, too, some compunction for having, on one or two former occasions, allowed his friend to be ill-spoken of without vindicating him, — resolved now to go and bear the brunt of Cade's wrath, and the general dislike, though his delicate nature shrank from the prospect of a scene which he foresaw was only too likely to be the result. The poor boy, thus gallantly resolved to stand up for the friend whom he had got to regard with that intense affection into which the friendships of boys or very young men often ripen (as is so admirably depicted by Disraeli in Coningsby), was at the same time conscious that tact and temper were no less requisite than firmness, and it was with his usual friendly face and tone, though perhaps with a flushed complexion, that he took his place at the mess-table. There was hardly a word spoken for some time; Vernon made some commonplace

observation, but was coldly answered. At last Cade, as if determined to commence operations, turned abruptly towards Abbot, the adjutant, who sat opposite to him, and said: "Well, what did you think of the griff's manner last night?"

"Think! there can't be two opinions about it. I only wish it had occurred before the young gentleman had passed his drill."

"I think," said Ensign Smith, sententiously, "that it was a personal insult to Cade; upon my honor, Cade, you ought to make him explain."

"Why you see, Smith," replied the great man, with an air of injured virtue, "it is not the insult to myself I so much mind; of course if any man insults me I know what to do; but I feel for the honor of the mess; I look upon Mr. Oakfield's impertinence as an insult to the officers of the regiment, and the regiment, in my opinion, should resent it."

"How do you mean?" said Abbot; "you can't well hand him up for it."

"O damn handing him up; you always stick to the shop-side of matters; no, I think it should be intimated to him by Abbot, as the senior officer present, that the mess expect an apology, and if he refuses to give it, the officers of the regiment will decline his further acquaintance."

"There 's hardly any one speaks to him now," said Smith.

"O yes, there are some," said Cade, looking at Vernon.

"If you mean me," Vernon said, "I tell you fairly I hope to continue to have the pleasure of Oakfield's acquaintance as long as he remains in the corps."

"O, indeed; perhaps you won't find it pleasant remaining in the corps yourself in that case, my young fellow. I tell you what," Cade added, violently losing his temper more and more, "we 've stood a great deal too much of this non-

sense; one griff giving himself airs, and another backing him up."

"Gently, gently," interposed Abbot, who was useful as still retaining an official conscience and sense of propriety, and knew that, however allowable ribaldry and blasphemy might be, quarrelling at a mess-table was not "regulation," and who knew also that, if Cade once began inveighing, he would soon commit himself and become abusive; "gently, Cade; draw it mild."

"I shall not give Mr. Cade the opportunity of insulting me," Vernon said, making a movement as if to leave the table; "I believe I sufficiently understand the hints which I have heard from others as well as him to-night, to make it clear that this is not a place for me; I only say that I think if anybody has a right to complain it is I; that I brought a guest to dinner on a public night, who was forced, you know how, to leave the table; and depend upon it, if there is a row, and this comes to the commanding officer's notice, it is quite impossible that *I* should get the worst of it."

He said this civilly, but with a firmness so different from the quiet, almost childish submission which his companions had been accustomed to see in him, that they were moved with surprise, though not in the least with admiration. It is a painful fact; but those who heard him were literally incapable of admiring moral courage, — they did not know what it meant; had he sworn and swaggered and offered to give Cade any satisfaction he liked, and all that sort of thing, it is possible that Smith and Brown would with a complacent candor have owned that, though he had made a fool of himself about Oakfield, he was a plucky fellow all the same; but a quiet gentlemanly courage was not in their line, — they could not admire because they could not understand it.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Abbot, as Vernon left the room. "Well, Smith, what do you think of that?"

"Infernal young humbug! Well, we 've got rid of him, that 's one thing."

"And a devilish good riddance too," chimed in Brown. "Eh, Cade?"

"Yes," said Cade, with a comical maudlin sentimentality; "and yet he was n't a bad fellow either, till that snob Oakfield spoiled him."

CHAPTER VI.

"True to the mark
They stem the current of that perilous gorge,
Their arms still strengthening with the strengthening heart."
WORDSWORTH.

THERE is great repose in being cut! While you are "on terms" with a man, as it is called, you may be in constant hot water, half quarrelling a dozen times a day; but once break or be broken with him, and you are at once sheltered by the "courtesies of society." Let two men who have been living cat and dog for a month, once fairly cut each other, and it is surprising how civil they become. If ever they have to transact business, it is done by studiously courteous notes, or if a personal interview becomes necessary, there is such a mutual be-mistering or be-captaining, and such an intensity of scraping and bowing politeness between them, that a stranger might set them down as capital friends in the Sir C. Grandison's style. So Vernon found it with regard to Cade. He told Stanton what had passed, and was greatly commended and supported by him; but Oakfield did not know till long afterwards how bravely his young friend had behaved. Vernon only said Cade was very angry with him for taking Oakfield's part, and they had had a row and were "cuts." Oakfield felt touched greatly by this even; he looked at the boy's gentle face and perceived how painful an effort it must have been to him to maintain his ground against Cade's overbearing coarseness; but how

deeply affected was he, when some months after he heard from Stanton of Vernon's resolute intention to go to mess, and there take upon himself the unpopularity and odium of defending his friend against all the officers, and of the firm, temperate, dignified manner in which he had carried out his purpose. Oakfield, however, knew enough to make him feel very grateful.

"I suppose, Arthur," he said, "I may conclude that if Cade has cut you he will *à fortiori* cut me, and in that case we had better look out for fresh quarters, because it will be awkward living in the same house with a man who won't speak to us. How shall we manage, — speak to Cade or write him a note?"

"Write him a note is the best plan, I think; — shall I write it?"

"No, no; let me write it."

So he wrote as follows: —

"My dear Sir: —

"As Mr. Vernon and myself propose occupying quarters together in another part of the station, we beg to request you will, if possible, get another officer to share this bungalow with you, from the first of next month, or earlier if you like.

"I remain,

"Yours truly,

"E. Oakfield."

This was addressed to "W. Cade, Esq.," and sent over to Smith's bungalow, where he was breakfasting, as had been his custom now for several weeks.

Presently the following reply came directed with scrupulous formality to "Ensign E. Oakfield, B. A., doing duty with the 81st Regiment, N. I."

"Lieutenant Cade presents his compliments to Ensign Oakfield,

and begs to inform him that Messrs. Smith and Brown will be happy to take possession any time after to-day of the rooms now occupied by Messrs. Oakfield and Vernon."

Now observe the convenience of the cutting system. This business would not have been transacted half so politely nor settled half so promptly had the parties been on speaking terms. So Brown and Smith gave up their quarters in the large barrack square, and went to live with Cade; and Vernon and Oakfield moved into Brown and Smith's deserted habitation, taking their guest with them, who was as much pleased as anybody with the new arrangement. But happy as Stanton was in his friend's society, he was still anxiously looking out for the arrival of the steamer which might take him up to Allahabad, on his way to join his troop at Meerut. Already the storm which burst upon the northwestern frontier of India in the years 1845 – 6 seemed to be gathering; and although the secrets of the Lahore Durbar had not transpired, yet the belief was general that the Sikhs, who had been so long talked of, were now really coming; and Stanton well knew that, if there was a campaign, every available troop of horse artillery would be ordered to the frontier. Meanwhile, Oakfield was expecting every day to hear of his being posted; so altogether they were an expectant household.

"Well, Oakfield! heard the news?" Vernon exclaimed, as he came in from his ride one cool morning in the month of November; "come, get up, you lazy dog."

"Oh!" groaned Oakfield, as he reluctantly roused himself from his prolonged slumber. "Well, — what is it? A steamer in?"

"No, not a steamer, only general orders, Unposted Ensign Edward Oakfield, B. A., doing duty with the 81st Regiment, N. I., to the 90th Regiment, N. I., at Meerut."

"No! is it really? By Jove!" With this somewhat unconnected exclamation he received the intelligence, and sank back on his pillow to think about it.

Posting is really a very great event to a man, almost as much so as the actual coming to India. It is a very exciting lottery, that chance of all the regiments in the army. And besides the excitement of chance, a regiment is a soldier's home as long as he remains in India. But it was not Oakfield's habit to say much, so Vernon soon left him, and he remained thinking about it. At breakfast they all three met, and of course Oakfield's posting was discussed.

"You won't see the campaign," said Stanton, "if there is one. I hear this morning that the last rumor is, that the 90th are to be left to garrison Meerut."

"You are posted as fourth Ensign, Oakfield," said Vernon; "I shall send in my application for the vacancy at once."

"I think you are right, really," interrupted Stanton, "I 've been in the country a good deal longer than you have, and I assure you that yours is by far the worst corps I have seen. I do not know much about the 90th, I never met them. They have a good name, I believe; smart, crack, that sort of thing, rather given, I fancy, to pipe-clay and imitating the Queen's; but you know one of their officers," nodding at Oakfield, "and he 's not such a bad fellow, though he has foolish notions of his own."

"No," answered Vernon, "I 've seen worse. O, I have made up my mind: I shall send in my application this morning. No, I shan't though; I 've got to write overlanders. I say, Oakfield, your posting has just come in time."

"Yes, I was just thinking of that; but the post does n't go out till four; you 'll have plenty of time to come with me to the Brigadier's first. I want to speak to him about leaving this to join."

They called on the Brigadier, and Oakfield was desired to hold himself in readiness to proceed by the next available government steamer. On inquiry, however, he found that for the next month or six weeks all the government steamers would be engaged for troops, so he would probably have to wait some time longer at Hajeepoor. This was so far a disappointment, that he had hoped to go on with Stanton; he consoled himself, however, with the reflection that in six weeks Vernon's exchange would perhaps be in orders, and he would have him for a companion. Having completed his business he sat down to write his letter for the overland. It was to his sister Margaret that he felt most inclined to write on all important occasions; she was that truest of all friends, who had listened to him with all the admiring, sympathizing, thoroughly unselfish interest which is to be found in a sister, while he tried to explain to himself and to her the reason of his Indian migration, — who had been his companion and favorite all his life, — whom, notwithstanding the constant assurance that he ought to love all his dear brothers and sisters equally, he had from the first persisted in "liking best." Let this extract from his letter explain his view of his own position at this juncture: —

"A great event has happened this morning. My posting, which has formed the immediate horizon of my anticipations for the last seven months, is in to-day's orders, and I shall leave this as soon as possible to join the 90th at Meerut. My dear friend Vernon, of whom I have so often told you, — always my kind, winning, gentle, affectionate, and, as he has lately shown himself, my brave and generous friend, — is going to apply for the same regiment, which is of course very pleasant. But beyond this I am quite in the dark as to the new land into which I am going, and yet it has a wonderful interest. I came out here six months ago with a vague hope of finding some great work going on, to which all willing helpers would be welcome. The bathos from these notions to the intense insignificance of an unposted Ensign

would have been wholly ludicrous, if not partly painful; but it was a painful thing to find one's self suddenly in the midst of a society horrible, monstrous, — I fancy altogether unique. Perceiving the mere fact of the Indian empire, we acknowledge at once that there must be, somewhere, great power and energy in it; and I trust, I believe, — Heaven help me if I did not believe it! — that as I grow more familiar with the country I shall come upon phases of European society very different from the only one I have hitherto witnessed; and yet doubt almost overpowers hope, for surely any very fervent, vital energy would make itself felt to one who was on the watch to detect it. I sometimes fear that it is almost impossible that any peculiar local circumstances could produce, as an exception, such a state of things as is to be found here; a society in which I solemnly assure you that there is not one man who could be called earnest or wise. Intelligent men there are, though very few in proportion; but these have mostly but a *beaver* kind of intelligence, more or less sharp or clever, but not able, not the least profound, not the least in earnest. But the characteristic of the majority is, to name one thing only, gross and really wonderful *stupidity;* and it is very striking to observe how fatal this universal lowness of wit is to all good. Of course it is itself partly cause and partly effect; but it is I think clear that, in the majority of cases, gross wickedness goes hand in hand with gross blockheadism. If I were asked why the majority of men in this country are so much worse than they are at home, I should say, at first thought, 'Because they are so much more stupid'; though of course this does but push the question a step further off: why are they more stupid? And perhaps the Irishman would not be wrong who should complete the circle by answering, 'Because they are more wicked.' But I am assured that I have as yet seen only the very worst specimen of Indian society, a very bad Native Infantry regiment. Stanton, my old steamer friend, who is now staying with me, on his way up country, tells me that most regiments are a good deal, some incomparably, better than this; that other arms of the service are better than the Infantry; and he says that for the most part the staff and civil service are better than the army at large; and finally, that the *élite* of the two latter are really positively good; I suppose, in short, the salt by which our Indian

empire retains any vestige of seasoning. I am sure I trust this is the case. It were a desperate project to look forward to spending one's life in probably fruitless antagonism to the grossest form of wickedness. The great object of a thinking man must always be social reform. So long as our European society in India is what it is, gross in its lowest phases, and (I grievously suspect) false and Mammonish in its highest, so long the most vigorous government will be nothing more than vigorous 'street constableship,' and all the missionarizing, &c. but the binding of a rope of sand. Social Reform is becoming the cry of the world; and I fancy it must be the cry of wise men in India as much as anywhere else. And what is social reform? The forming society anew (a sensible man might say), on the foundation of common sense and intellect, not of animalism and violence and hazard; on a foundation (the religious man will say) of truth and justice, not of money and formulæ and (though the expression has a Puritan twang, yet it is a very meaning one) carnal comforts; on the foundation (a Christian man will say) of Christ and his Gospel, which has been tried in name for eighteen hundred years, and in deed seems destined to be never tried at all; not of self-worship nor sect-worship, least of all on that most portentous of all lies, a world-wide-professing, Sunday-church-preaching, week-day-Mammon-practising Christianity. That is, in very general terms, my idea of a man's duty in this country; to help in the work, or try to set it going, of raising the *European society*, the great influence of Asia, first from the depths of immorality, gradually to a state of comparative Christian earnestness. I am quite certain that nothing less than Christianity, in the Cromwell or in some other shape, will have any effect upon the perfectly awful *vis inertiæ* of Asiaticism. The protection of life and property, of which we hear so much, is of course a clear good; hardly, though, a very disinterested boon of ours to this country, for if life and property were insecure, whose throats or purses would go first? But for any purpose beyond protection to life and property (and I for one will not believe that God gave England the Indian empire for police purposes merely) an eating and drinking money-getting community is inefficient."

* * * * *

"I have come to the conclusion," said Oakfield, as they sat at breakfast the day before that fixed for Stanton's departure, "that the only thing I shall regret in Hajeepoor is the Ganges; I vote we have a farewell sail this afternoon before Stanton goes."

"It 's very hot to go out in the afternoon," Stanton observed, with the prudence of a senior.

"What, hot in November, at three o'clock, and a cloudy day! why, I was going to advise you to take a cloak."

It was arranged to go, and certainly at three o'clock there seemed very little ground for Stanton's fear of the heat. The sun was seldom visible, struggling along through dry black and white clouds; it was not an inviting day; the river looked cold, and the sand-banks seemed more bleak and ruffled than usual; just the day when the leaves, had there been any, would have been blown backwards, that uncomfortable characteristic of a March day in England. Viewed nautically, however, the day was promising enough; the wind fresh and steady, blowing nearly across the river from the right, that is to say, the Hajeepoor bank; rather up than down stream. They sailed steadily up the river, — keeping at first close to the home bank, but necessarily getting more and more into the middle of the stream as that bank receded, bending back to the confluence of the Ganges with the Soane. They got on slowly, for though the wind was fresh, the budgerow was a tub and the current strong. This did not matter, however, as they would have it in their favor returning. By five o'clock they had got about two miles up the river, and were almost close under the further bank. Their object now was to stand across and run down home. This, however, they soon found, would be a longer business than they had expected. The wind, gradually stealing round, now blew almost directly across the river, and their boat was not calculated to work well on a wind. The

more they put the helm down, the more the sail shivered, and she fell off again, and so in half an hour's time they found themselves opposite Hajeepoor, but not more than three hundred yards from the left bank.

"We shall be down at Ramghur before we get across," said Stanton.

"Humph," said Vernon, "I hope not; I fancy we should have *that* before we got to Ramghur"; pointing as he spoke to a dark, dirty line which was becoming more and more visible in the horizon.

"By Jove, yes!" cried Stanton; "that's a typhaon coming up, sure enough. I say, captain," turning to Oakfield at the helm, "what's to be done? You'll never be able to stand against that, you know."

"No," said Oakfield, "it will be here in less than five minutes; we must run for the bank, if the worst comes to the worst we can sleep in a bunniah's hut. Can you both swim?"

"Swim!" exclaimed Vernon, who was watching the approaching storm with a sparkling eye and heightened color; "why, I wonder how many Ganges breadths I've swum at Alborough before now: fancy a fellow living five miles from the German Ocean and not swimming!"

"Well, get your boots off, for if this villanous old tub meanders about as she generally does when running before the wind, we stand a fair chance of a ducking."

While this conversation was going on, Oakfield was preparing to get the boat's head round. It was however a ticklish business. Tacking in such a machine and against the stream was out of the question, so they had nothing for it but to wear. The wind preceding the hurricane was freshening every moment, and the contest between it and the current was becoming more and more severe. The instant the influence of the rudder was relaxed, the boat fell off from her diagonal and dashed down the river on a side wind, at a

pace that her three occupants, an hour beforehand, would have voted her altogether incapable of.

"We sha'n't get her round," said Oakfield, quietly kicking off his second boot; "look out for a capsize, and keep yourselves clear of the boat." As he spoke, putting the helm up at the same time to its extreme limit, the squall burst upon them with a fierce howl. "Keep well to this side," Oakfield shouted, as he sprang upon the gunwale, which was almost perpendicular to the water; "it will be over directly. It's no good, Vernon, you can't get the sail down. Don't try it, man! don't try it!"

But unfortunately Vernon tried it, and the manœuvre, which might have saved them five minutes earlier, was now ruin. The sail had already dipped two or three times in the water, when Vernon lowered the rope, and the yard fell about a foot. Instantly the belly of the sail took a firm hold of the water and was too far filled to right again.

"It's all up!" cried Oakfield, as she reeled over gradually (for the squall had passed over them, and it was but the weight of the sail that now dragged her down): "mind yourselves; better jump overboard, Vernon, and catch hold of the boat." Accordingly, as the boat turned bottom up, they half jumped, half let themselves down into the water. Stanton and Oakfield immediately rested upon the budgerow, which, keel uppermost, was floating down the river in a very disconsolate fashion, at an easy pace. Vernon was less fortunate; he missed his grasp of the boat, and before he could recover himself was carried down some way below it. He turned round and tried to make towards her, or at least to hold his own till she should come alongside. Finding his efforts fruitless, he again turned round and struck out with the stream, trying to work in towards the bank.

"Bravely done!" exclaimed Stanton, who with Oakfield was anxiously watching him, while riding down the stream,

holding on to the boat; "it 's his only plan, but he must not be left to take care of himself. Hallo, Oakfield!" This exclamation broke from him as he perceived his companion holding on with one hand, while with the other he divested himself of his coat, waistcoat, and shirt. "Stay where you are, for God's sake, it 's no good our both going."

"Then you stay, for it 's my business to go."

"Well, well," said Stanton, "it 's no good disputing; I see we both mean to go, which is very foolish; here goes."

While speaking he had followed Oakfield's example as to stripping, and both plunging off together struck out strongly after their friend. It was getting dark, but they could still trace his light dress on the water, only a few yards in advance of them; at first the current bore both parties down at nearly an equal rate, and with little effort of theirs; but as they got into the quiet water, near the shore, it was evident that the weight of his clothes was beginning to tell upon Vernon, who seemed hardly to make any way at all. Stanton and Oakfield struck out with all their force, and gained upon him rapidly, when just as they were within one stroke of him he vanished. Oakfield, who was a trifle in advance, proceeded two or three strokes and then dived, and a wonderful sensation came over him as he felt his hand grasping human hair. Together they came to the surface, but Oakfield was all but exhausted, and a horrible fear came over him. Still he struggled on with his left arm, while with his right he labored to keep the unconscious Vernon with his head above water, when just as Stanton came up, and relieved Oakfield of his burden, the latter's strength failed him, and in agony of doubts he let his feet down, and to his inexpressible comfort felt the muddy ground under him. Stopping a few moments to recover his breath, which had been so entirely exhausted by the dive, he called out to Stanton to walk, and so they waded to shore with Ver-

non still insensible between them. They said nothing; fearfully exhausted, they just looked at each other with a smile and a nod of deep expression, and then proceeded as best they could to dry and then to rub Vernon. He had been hardly a minute under water, but it was a long time before he opened his eyes. They would not allow him to speak, but procuring two or three flowing robes from some passing natives, wrapped him up and carried him to the bank, and there waited while the same natives who had lent their garments got together the boatmen of one of the numerous budgerows; who, more prudent than our friends, had foreseen the storm and run in shore for the night, and now readily agreed to carry them across. The night was completely calm, and in about half an hour they were on the other bank, but a good three miles below Hajeepoor. Stanton, however, easily procured a *Charpoy** in the village where they landed, and got coolies† to carry Vernon upon it to cantonments, while he and Oakfield walked by the side. They reached their quarters about seven o' clock; the doctor came to see Vernon, who seemed to be suffering fearfully from exhaustion, but not more, the doctor said, than food and sleep would cure. So they saw him lying asleep peacefully, looking pale and calm and beautiful, and then, after recruiting their own strength, and dismissing, with a sufficient reward, the natives who had befriended them, and had followed to cantonments to get their clothes back, sat down to discuss the events of the day.

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* *Charpoy* — lit. having four feet — signifies a bedstead.

† Coolies, — the unskilled laboring class; the hewers of wood and drawers of water.

CHAPTER VII.

"Then followed counsel, comfort, and the words
That make a man feel strong in speaking truth."

TENNYSON.

"The steps of the bearers heavy and slow,
And the sobs of the mourners deep and low;
The weary sound and the heavy breath,
And the silent motions of passing death."

SHELLEY.

STANTON took his departure the next day; — an anxious leave-taking, for events had confirmed the rumor of a Sikh invasion, the campaign was almost begun, and there was no telling how, or when, or where the three friends would meet again.

Vernon seemed better next morning, but was unable to leave his bed. "I want you," he said to Oakfield, who took him his breakfast, "to tell me all about it."

"How far do you remember?" said Oakfield.

"I remember everything till just before I must have gone down; I recollect the upset perfectly; by the by, I upset you all by letting down the sail; we ought to have done that at first, Oakfield."

"We ought, I grant, but I had no idea the squall would come up so quickly; it was an unsuccessful farewell to the Ganges, was n't it? — at least to you, for you are the only sufferer by the adventure, and you 'll be all right, I hope, in a day or two."

"I don't know that, Oakfield; I feel rather queer. I suspect I have not been very well for some time: I thought it was all over with me yesterday."

"When?"

"Only just for an instant; I recollect feeling that I could swim no further, and a momentary impression flashed across me that I was going to die; but here I am, you see, and perhaps going to die in my bed." He said this so sadly that Oakfield, who had been walking up and down the room, stopped short and turned to look at him. There was a soft smile on his face and a tear in his eye.

"My dear Arthur, what is it? are you ill? do you really feel alarmed about yourself?"

"I think I 'm going to be very ill, Oakfield; I have a pain here," putting his hand on his side, "and a tightness across the chest, and altogether feel down."

Oakfield became thoroughly alarmed, and, ordering his horse, galloped over to Watson, the doctor of the corps.

"You saw Vernon this morning, Doctor?"

"Yes; why?"

"What did you think of him? He seems very unwell, and nervous about himself."

"I thought him looking very unwell, certainly," replied the other, "but he did n't complain of anything. I asked him if he felt comfortable, and he said yes."

"I wish you would come and have a look at him; he speaks of pain in his side, and so on."

This was quite enough for the good doctor, who was not only thoroughly zealous in his profession, but had come out, as doctors and nurses often do, from the harassing worry and watching of a large town-practice at home, quite overflowing with the milk of human kindness.

He found Vernon suffering from evident symptoms of violent inflammation, and instantly adopted strong remedies.

That evening the poor boy lay, weakened by the application of sixty leeches, with a large blister on his chest; pale and silent, established for days, if not for weeks, as an invalid. Oakfield sat by him, reading and talking quietly to him from time to time.

"Do the fellows in the regiment know of our accident, Oakfield?"

"O yes; I had a note from the Colonel this morning, asking after you; and Smith and Brown called this evening."

"No! did they? I am glad of that; I thought they had cut me."

Oakfield was touched by the ready sensibility to kindness, or rather by the shrinking from unkindness or coldness, and felt again what a noble effort plain speaking must have cost such a gentle nature. Presently, after lying still for a long time, he said, "Oakfield, shall you go to New Zealand?"

"Why, what put that into your head now? we hav'n't talked of New Zealand for a long time; it depends partly upon you, you know; I sha'n't go without you."

"I hope you will go," Vernon went on, without noticing the answer; "you will never like this country, Oakfield."

"Well, but that does n't signify much; we cannot go all over the world looking for a place we shall like."

"But may not you look out for a place that likes you? Why that 's what you used to say yourself."

"So I used, Arthur, and I don't know that I should deny it now, but I have thought more of the other side of the question lately; especially since you and Stanton and I have been so much together."

"And what do you call the other side of the question?"

"That we ought to stand still and see what God will do for us: that we should overcome our position, and not run away from it: above all, the shortness of life, — that in a

few years we shall go, and then all these things that harass us vanish into oblivion, and that it is really of comparatively very little consequence whether these few years are happily spent or not."

"That 's very true, so long as you can keep the shortness of life present to you; but one forgets it."

"Indeed one does, but I think one of the good things we owe to this country is, that it helps us to remember it; and once get this present to us, as you say, and we have the 'philosophic mind' at once."

"That 's true, I think, about this country," said Vernon, "one does feel the uncertainty of life more; I wonder why?"

"I fancy because we get into the habit of looking forward to distant periods, such as furlough, retirement, and so on; and thus cannot but feel occasionally the great chance which separates us from the certain prospect of these."

"And can you feel quite happy when you realize the shortness of life, or when you think steadily of death?"

"To say I feel happy in the sense that a Christian is happy at the thought of death, would be to assume that I was in the land of Beulah, when I have hardly set out on pilgrimage; but I certainly have no fear of death, and I do find immense comfort in the thought of the oblivion we spoke of."

"But does not the thought of not seeing your family again make it horrible to you? O Oakfield, my mother! think of her"; and he burst into tears. It was evident that he had been talking generally, but with his own case uppermost in his mind. Oakfield was angry with himself for having inadvertently produced an agitation which might be injurious, but he was too sensible and too sincere to give the absurd commonplace advice of "Never mind," "Don't think

about it," "Compose yourself," and all the rest of it. He tried to think honestly what was likely to be the most real comfort in such a case. "Dear, dear Arthur," he said, taking his hand in both his own, and leaning over the bed, and speaking very softly, "it *is* sad, and always must be; it is one of the things that makes our life not a happy, but a sad and solemn one; we must admit this, and make up our minds to it. There is some comfort even in this, — in acknowledging sorrow, and then resolving to bear, that is, to overcome it; but for us, Arthur, there is a comfort beyond this."

"Yes, I know what you mean."

"It is indeed well known to us all: perhaps so well known as to have the less power of comfort on that account. But you know how often we have agreed about avoiding triteness in our religion, by trying to apply it practically to all the occasions of life. Consider, Arthur. We often hear people talk of the *consolations of religion* in such an obviously funereal way, and see so clearly that they really find no consolation in them, that we are apt to think they really *are* a form, and have no power of comfort in them; and yet depend upon it they have, though the comfort will not come to us, if we sit waiting for it, till doomsday; yet we may force it to come by an effort. Try now. Try to fix your mind upon Martha and Mary waiting for Jesus. Think of them there, at Bethany; their brother, too, is gone; they have had all the melancholy of a funeral, and the real and the forced gravity of countenance in all around them; they have gone through all the self-torture of recalling their dead brother, his looks upon different occasions, their last words with him, — their early intercourse as children, their later true friendship as brother and sister, — and now he is dead; in the cold sepulchre, bound in the hideous grave-clothes; they can never see him again. Well, it is sad, and life is a

sad thing, Arthur, but then there were the 'consolations of religion' for them, which they found to be not at all a powerless form. They sent to Jesus. He comes and finds that there is something more sad than even the death of a friend or a brother. He healed *that* sorrow, and not only so, but said to Martha, and says actually to you and me, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life'; not only do I raise Lazarus, but I am to all for evermore the resurrection and the life. Think that He who spoke and did, as we know, at Bethany, eighteen hundred years ago, is actually ready, is here present, to comfort our sorrow now, — now, this sad evening at Hajeepoor, — loves us and looks tenderly on us, as he did on Martha and Mary. Is not there some consolation in this, Arthur?"

The young boy was deeply touched; Oakfield knelt by his bedside, and they prayed together in simple, earnest words, and when Oakfield saw his calm, pale face, as the sick boy lay asleep that night, he felt that the agitation had not done him much harm after all.

Vernon continued in much the same state for some days; the doctor hardly knew, he said, why he did not get better; he had no fever, the inflammation was subdued, and the worst symptoms were his weakness and his blind perception of some obscure disease. He was quite unable to leave his bed, could hardly lift himself up, indeed, without assistance. Oakfield and the doctor watched him day and night. The former read to him, and talked with him; not often on what would be called directly religious subjects, but on matters which, being so serious as life and man's position in life, are perhaps really the very ground of all religion.

It was about a week after the conversation recorded above, that they first observed a swelling on his chest, which symptom was accompanied by profuse and continued perspiration. Constant poulticing made this swelling more and

more decided; and it was obvious that there was internal mischief, probably no less than that fearful Indian scourge, abscess of the liver. So he continued for three weeks longer, becoming continually weaker and weaker. About eleven o'clock in the day was generally his best time, when his bed was moved into the verandah, for the mild December warmth, and Oakfield washed his hands and face and set up his pillows for him. There he would lie, with his poor, pale, smiling face, looking delicate almost as a girl's, turned upon his true, strong friend, who sat by him reading, but always ready to talk when the invalid was able to bear it. They were sitting so one day in December, when the overland letters came in both for Oakfield and for Vernon. Vernon took his eagerly, an unwonted flush came over his countenance, and the ready tears took advantage of his bodily weakness to betray his deep emotion.

"Is n't that your brother's handwriting?" said Oakfield.

"O, such a jolly letter!" Vernon answered; he has gone home after being absent nearly three years; and he describes his arrival. Read it yourself; read it out loud to me."

Oakfield did as he was told, and could understand Vernon's intense feeling, half pleasure half pain, at the detailed graphical account given by the young sailor of his return home, and how he found everything the same after his three years' absence. "That is delightful indeed," exclaimed Oakfield; "such a letter as this is the next best thing to going home one's self. I should like to know your brother; he must be a brick."

"I should just think he was. O, you must know him some day; he 'll be an extraordinary man, depend upon it; he is madly fond of his profession, and you see how he feels about home; there are not many boys of fourteen who could have written such a letter as that, are there?"

"Indeed there are not," Oakfield said, with perfect honesty.

"Poor little boy! how fond he was of me," Vernon went on, and his eyes filled again; "we were the only two boys, you know, and though I was four years older, we were complete companions. I remember I taught him how to steer a boat on the Orwell years ago; and he told me in one of his letters, that he thought of that one day when first steering one of the ship's boats on the Tagus. You must promise, Oakfield, to go to my place if ever you go back to England. Oakfield," he said, after a pause, speaking abruptly, "do you think I shall die?"

Oakfield had for some days anticipated this question; leaning down he said softly, "You are very dangerously ill, Arthur, and the doctor does not know whether you will recover or not. Dearest Arthur, I dare not mock you by giving you a false answer. It is very awful; God strengthen you, Arthur!"

The boy lay back with his eyes closed, and made no answer.

"I feel far less startled than I dare say you think; I suppose it is because I 've thought so much about dying lately, and we have talked about it so often, and life has been so much more solemn. O Oakfield, fancy if this had happened six months ago! I do thank God for sending you here."

It is a moment of awful happiness when man from the bottom of his heart thanks God for that great gift, a friend; an awful and an allowable happiness: weak as we are and as we feel, little able, we know, to support ourselves, still less another, yet here our brother thanks God for us. Our brother, lying between life and death, with awful sincerity thanks God for us. Truly we may with all humbleness thank God also.

Both were deeply moved, and sat some time in silence; nor did they renew the conversation in the same strain.

Oakfield abstained scrupulously from any attempt to work upon feelings so finely stretched, and if at times these feelings would find utterance, yet the occasions were rare, and for the most part the intercourse between them was grave indeed, but calm and sober, taking a tone, not in actual words, but no less really, from the deep consciousness that was in them both of life and death, and the meaning that is in those words.

Except Oakfield, Vernon hardly saw anybody. The officers of the regiment called frequently to inquire after him, all unkind feelings being completely obliterated by the presence of deadly sickness, but were not allowed to see him. The doctor, a good, kind man, had all his life associated "religion and all that" with gloom, the hopeless stage of illness, and the parson. He would talk in a cheerful voice of the news of the station, of the time when Vernon would be up and about again; all which the patient heard very quietly, and, understanding how it was meant, gratefully, but with a silent incredulity that would have astonished the good doctor, could he have been aware of it. Meanwhile he perceived that Oakfield got on best with him, and that Vernon never seemed quite satisfied when he was absent, "Though how a sick man can like to talk about dying all day," he would say, "I can't comprehend."

"But, my dear doctor, we very seldom talk about dying."

"Well, but you talk religious, which is all the same thing."

"Why," answered Oakfield, laughing, "I doubt whether in the sense you mean, that we talk much religious either; you don't expect a person who may be on his death-bed to be very facetious?"

"But he does n't know that he may be on his death-bed."

"O yes, he does; I told him so."

"You did! Good heavens, what madness! I must say,

Oakfield, that, to take such a liberty with a patient of mine — "

"My dear doctor, do you think it has done him any harm? It was more than a week ago that I told him."

"More than a week ago! And he never said a word to me about it! Well, you certainly are two odd fellows. O, you may say what you like; I sha'n't interfere; but, I say, would n't he like to see the padré? I did n't like to suggest it before for fear of frightening him, but if he knows his state — "

"Thank you," said Oakfield, "I'll ask him, though I don't think he will; but what do you think of his state, Watson? Is there any hope?"

"I fear very little, poor boy! I fear the abscess must be very deep."

"When do you think it is likely to come to a crisis?"

"It 's impossible to say, exactly, but I should think he 'd be out of danger or a dead man this day week."

Oakfield shuddered with pain, and turned aside with an instinctive reluctance to display his feelings. He had been so absorbed in his attendance at the sick-bed, in his earnest searching of his own heart, to try and find what would be most likely to be of comfort to himself under the same circumstances, that so he might the more readily comfort Arthur, that he had scarcely considered the pang which his own heart and affections would have to endure, if his friend was taken from him. He had, however, now to keep his promise to Watson, and ask Vernon about seeing the clergyman. He did not like the errand. He knew Mr. Wood to be a respectable, commonplace, to all appearances rather worldly, man. He knew exactly how he would regard a summons to a sick-bed; as a duty to be gone through almost as methodically as his Sunday service. He would not come in hypocrisy, but still Oakfield felt how inexpressibly pain-

ful any appearance of commonplace, cut and dried, sham consolation would be to himself in the presence of such an awful truth as death. However, he could hardly refuse to ask Vernon, and besides, he had promised Watson to do so; Vernon, however, relieved him immediately, — "No, thank you, old fellow, no, I don't like the notion of sending for a clergyman as one would for a doctor; it is n't the time to commence an intimacy, and I must be intimate with a man, be he clergyman or anybody else, before I can talk to him as I do to you. You don't think *I ought* to see him, do you?"

"No, indeed, dear Arthur; you have spoken my feelings about the matter most exactly; I only asked because I promised I would; I feel precisely as you do about it." So Oakfield told the doctor that Vernon was very much obliged to him for asking, but, as he had not known Mr. Wood, he would rather not see him; which bewildered the poor doctor more than all the rest. That night Oakfield and Vernon (the latter for the last time on earth) ate and drank together the bread and wine in remembrance of the death of their Lord and Master.

> "They ate and drank, then calmly blest;
> *Both* mourners, one with dying breath,
> They sat and talked of Jesus' death";

and found that the consolations of religion were not a form when not sought or applied in a formal spirit.

Vernon continued in the same state for three or four days, the only difference being his still increasing weakness, and the great enlargement of the swelling on his chest. One cold, blowing December night, Oakfield was as usual sitting by his side dozing, but, from the training of the last month, ready to wake up in an instant, if his services were needed. It was about eight o'clock when Vernon opened his eyes, and said in a low, scarcely audible voice, "Oakfield," —

he was awake and at his bedside in an instant, — "Oakfield, I have got a terrible pain here," laying his hand on his side. As he spoke it seemed to increase, his face was almost convulsed with agony, as he lay patient and speechless. The doctor was instantly summoned: he looked at his chest; the swelling was altogether gone, the skin, where it had been, lying loose, flat, and discolored. Watson shook his head. "The abscess is gone internally," he whispered to Oakfield; "there 's nothing to be done but to ease this terrible pain, poor fellow!"

He gave him a strong dose of laudanum, and the effect was soon evident; the pain became lulled, and he lay throughout the night in a short, broken, uneasy sleep. But when daylight broke, it was clear that the hand of death was upon that pale, suffering face. All day long he lay in the same fitful, half-artificial slumber; towards evening he woke up and talked with Oakfield in his natural quiet tone, speaking of his family and of his own state, but apparently not knowing how near his end was. To others, however, it was quite manifest.

"Why have you changed the light to-night?" he asked of Oakfield, who at first did not understand him. On hearing the question repeated, however, he told him that there was no difference.

"Surely you have got the room darker than usual?"

"No; there were the two lamps," Oakfield said, "the same as every night."

"Ah well!" he said, with a long sigh, "I suppose it is I can't see so well."

He lay back, and for about an hour remained silent. At the end of that time he sprang up with a suddenness and energy that startled Oakfield beyond expression, and shouted, rather than said, in a voice the doctor heard three rooms off, "I 'm dying!" Exhausted by the effort, he sank back, and

Oakfield, kneeling down by his bedside, found his pillow wet with tears. Vernon looked at Oakfield, and, smiling through his tears, stretched out his hand, laid it upon his head, and said, "God bless you!" They were the last words that Oakfield and Watson could hear. He lay for some time with his hands joined, murmuring indistinct sounds, but these gradually ceased, and the one sound in that silent room was the breathings of the dying boy, at longer and longer intervals. They watched and watched: no change was seen; no movement disturbed that calm, but at last the slowly heaving chest was still: still they watched, but no breath followed; and they knew that he was gone. That young soul had done its life-battle and was at rest.

For a long time the two watchers sat in the same posture, silent and motionless as the lifeless form before them; at last the doctor rose up, saying, "Ah, — poor lad!" At the words Oakfield's grief broke from him, and the repressed emotions of the preceding weeks rushed upon him with a violence that shook his whole frame. The doctor took him by the arm, and led him into the next room, and then, while other hands did the offices of death for him whom in life he alone had so truly and tenderly cared for, he fell into a deep and heavy sleep, to awake in the morning and find that the absorbing interest of the last month was past, to begin to realize the fact that his brave young friend was dead. The next day was an entirely painful one. There may be something morbid, perhaps something factitious in the ceremony and circumstance with which death is invested in an English household, but certainly there is, on the other hand, something very shocking to the delicacy of grief in the loud intrusion which Indian usage and military regulations necessitate.

Oakfield woke to find the house, which had been so long wrapped in perfect quiet, beset with strange faces. In one

room lay the dead, and there men were receiving orders for the funeral, which was to take place in the evening. In the next room Captain Roberts, a complete stranger to Oakfield, who had been named as president of the committee of adjustment, was sealing up all the boxes containing Vernon's property; while the harsh formal appearance of the business was not relieved by the tramp of the sentry, who had been just posted in the quarters. Oakfield passed a wretched day; the obvious anxiety on all sides to get the funeral over, and death out of sight as speedily as possible, was of itself painful; and the hard, dull pain, which solitude and thought could alone melt into a loving, soothing grief, was protracted by the bustle of business with which he was surrounded.

At five o'clock that evening Watson came to tell him to dress, that the carrying party were at the door. Oakfield saw the body carried out; Vernon's sword-sash and shako lay upon the coffin; he and three other Ensigns bore the pall; and the party, joined as they went along by almost all the officers of the garrison, moved in slow time to the death-like notes of the Dead March in Saul, across the large, white, desolate barrack square, to the burying-ground. The service was read; the firing party discharged three volleys over the grave, and then the one object seemed to be to shake off all impression of solemnity as soon as possible. The band struck up a lively march, the troops with sloped arms went away at the quick step, officers galloped off to get off their full dress, and go out for their ride on the course; and in half an hour Vernon's memory had no place in Hajeepoor, except in one heart. The hours passed on that night and still left Oakfield walking by the banks of the Ganges, as its waters splintered mournfully in the moonlight, thinking on his dead friend; cherishing his love and grief for him, and resolving to hold fast the great lesson that had

been given to himself; having been, at the outset of his Indian life, brought in such close contact with sickness and death, to believe in the truth which they taught, and not to allow that truth to be hidden under the varnish of a noisy worldliness.

CHAPTER VIII.

"That which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield."

TENNYSON.

"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

PAUL, *Romans* xiv. 5.

IT may readily be imagined that Oakfield was not sorry when, on the 1st of January, 1846, he was told that a steamer was at the ghat. He took leave of Watson, the only person with whom he had kept up much intercourse since Vernon's death, and went on board; and early the next morning, just as the gun was fired directly above the steamer, almost shaking the passengers out of their beds, the anchor was weighed, and they started for Allahabad, steaming quickly over the two miles which Oakfield had last traversed in the boat with Vernon and Stanton, the day of their misadventure.

There were only four persons in the cabin, to all of whom Oakfield was introduced at breakfast-time by the captain. Lieutenant Dacre, of the 101st, going to join his regiment, after six months' leave to Calcutta, a quiet, inoffensive man, of about five-and-twenty, who managed to get through the short day by the help of three meals, and a connecting line of brandy and water and cheroots; Mr. Middleton, of the

Civil Service, — an intelligent, gentlemanly-looking man, of apparently some ten or twelve years' standing, who was going to that gorgeous land of civilian imagination, — the Northwestern Frontier; the Rev. Mr. Wallace, an assistant chaplain, fresh from Oxford, on his way to "take spiritual charge" of Meerut, with an agreeable and very gentlemanly manner, but an ominously cut waistcoat, and a tie whose starch looked "Popish." The fourth was introduced as simply "Mr. Malone," and what he was did not easily appear. What he was not was sufficiently evident. He was not an officer, or he would assuredly have had either a forage-cap or a "solar topee"* on his head, and the punctilious captain would certainly have given his rank, had it lain between any of the known latitudes from Major-General to Ensign. He wore a black coat and a black hat, but of a seediness that any member of the Bengal Civil Service would have repudiated. He wore a neckcloth, which he himself and a complaisant friend might have called white, but even could the Church of England have been suspected of that loose soiled linen, yet the brilliant plaid waistcoat and broadly checked trousers at once excluded the idea of Mr. Malone being an orthodox padré. An unorthodox one perhaps; one of the numerous dissenting ministers. Here again the glowing costume, and still more the glowing nose, and loose, rather dissipated countenance, were against the hypothesis. He might belong to some branch of the wide-extending, amphibious "uncovenanted service," those strange unclassable mortals who, some say, do more than half the work of the country, and most undeniably get less than half a quarter of the good things of it. And yet he had nothing *clerky* about his appearance; and you might swear was not a hard-work-

* "Solar topee." Topee signifies "hat"; solar is the name of a very light material of which large umbrella-like hats are made, to keep off the sun.

ing man. He had thin sandy hair, and little of it; large red features, a gray shrewd eye, a rough, reddish, ill-shaven beard, a broad-shouldered, broad-chested, strong, rather ungainly figure; might be about thirty-five or forty years of age; wore his clothes loosely, and had rather a dirty, dissipated, yet withal a shrewd, not ill-natured expression of countenance; nor did it require his Hibernian name, and the rich brogue which garnished his unceasing loquacity, to prove him an Irishman. During breakfast, which Captain Browne provided with more liberality than is quite usual with commanders of river steamers, Oakfield made the observations of which the above was pretty nearly the result. The usual formalities with which shore-goers hail each other when they meet, — which, after all, are little more than a prolix variation of the "where from," "whither bound," "what 's your name," of the sailors, — being got over, there is no saying what turn the conversation might have taken; but Mr. Malone was far from satisfied with the scanty information, that Oakfield had been doing duty with the 81st, and was going up to Meerut to join the 90th, that he did not much like the country, and so on. "Pray, Sir," he began, with an accent which we, being but English, must ask the reader to insert for himself, "may I ask if you 're anything to the Oakfields of Durham?"

Oakfield said he believed not, did not indeed know that there were any Oakfields of Durham.

"O yes, Sir; Mr. Oakfield, of Castleton Hall, Durham. A very nice property it is; it 's not a year ago that I was staying there. Oakfield," he continued, in a musing voice, "there 's Mr. Oakfield, of Leatheburn —"

"Good gracious!" Oakfield exclaimed, with a start of surprise: then, recovering himself, he asked more quietly, "Do you know anything of him, Sir?"

"O, indeed, and I did know Mr. Oakfield very well; was he your papa, Sir?"

"He was my father," said Oakfield, substituting the more dignified name for the relationship.

"O, and I see you are very like him. I knew your papa, Sir, twenty years ago, when he was a poor curate in London; fine property that he came into; and queerly he came upon it."

Oakfield was quite taken aback by the strange mixture of knowledge and ignorance displayed by this stranger's remarks about his father; he certainly had been a curate in London twenty years back, and had come into the small Westmoreland estate, which he had held as squire and parson, by a strange unforeseen contingency; but no one who had known him or it would speak of Leatheburn as a fine property. He said, laughing, "Well, I don't know that people would call a small estate of 500*l.* a year a fine property."

"O, bless my soul, 500*l.* a year! what are you talking about? — Ah, I see," he added, perceiving that Oakfield was going to interrupt him; "you 're a young gentleman, and don't know much of your mamma's affairs; came out here to be kept out of harm's way; I understand." And he winked at the other passengers with such a delicious impudence, that Oakfield did not know whether to be amused or indignant.

"You need n't be surprised," said Mr. Middleton, laughing, to Oakfield; "Mr. Malone knows more about all of us than we do ourselves; he 's an extraordinary man," he added in a low tone, observing that the subject of his remark was expatiating to his neighbor, Mr. Wallace, on the splendor of Oakfield's prospects, — "there 's not a man at this table whose family history he has n't got some inkling of; you must n't be offended at his impertinence, he 's great fun, I assure you."

"What is he?" Oakfield asked.

"Why, that is more than I can tell you," replied the other, as they got up and went out on to the deck; "he seems either to be or have been connected with the English press, with some London newspaper; discourses a good deal upon the renewal of the Charter; talks with a strange mixture of knowledge and absurd ignorance about the state of things in this country; writes a good deal, I fancy notes on what he sees and hears about India; but how long he will be in the country, or what his exact business is, or where he is going now, I can't say; in fact, *himself* is the only object on which he seems troubled with the least reserve."

Oakfield found Mr. Middleton a pleasing, intelligent companion: he had been in India ten years, was fond of his profession, and hard work had greatly raised and improved him. It must be allowed, indeed, to the Bengal civilians, that they are for the most part a hard-working set, and it is a wonderful proof of the influence work has upon a man, that the young fop of eighteen or nineteen, with no better training than the hybrid half-school, half-college system of Haileybury can give him, is developed mostly into the persevering and sensible, often the zealous and able, man of thirty.

"I suppose," Oakfield said, after they had been some time talking of India, Natives, and so on, "that you look forward, as most of your service do, with great interest to the renewal of the Charter."

"Well, it is some way off yet; and if it were nearer I think its importance is exaggerated. I for one should certainly look forward to any alterations with more apprehension than hope."

"That is the case with most of your service, I suppose?"

"Yes, and I fear that too often the apprehensions spring from interested motives; but I really believe that this country would be a loser by any serious interference."

"I own," said Oakfield, "if you will allow me to speak at all on a subject on which I have so very little experience, that I should have fancied that, the English community in this country being what it is, any reform from within is not to be hoped for, and that England — "

"I agree with you," interrupted Mr. Middleton, "any great movement in this country must, I believe, or at any rate will, originate in an English rather than an Indian agitation; but I do not think that a Leadenhall Street or a Cannon Row interference is at all the same thing."

"But would it not be a parliamentary interference?"

"Of course, nominally; but it depends upon the amount of feeling in the country as to whether the Company and the Board of Control have it all their own way in Parliament, and you know how very little interest exists in England about India."

"More than used to do."

"Undoubtedly, and will be more and more, and perhaps if you live some fifty years longer, not to this but the next renewal of the Charter, you will see something worth seeing; but till then I think we shall jog on our old ways."

"And are those ways such as you can be content to jog on in?"

"I think, on the whole, — yes. You see the first thing to be done in this country is what I grant ought to have been begun long ago, notwithstanding our wars; which might certainly have been begun in the long interval of comparative peace from the siege of Bhurtpoor to the Cabul war, which is in fact only being begun now; viz. the *physical* civilization of the country; we have enemies enough to conquer in the shape of Time, and Space, and Jungle, to employ us for the next half-century; roads, canals, possibly railroads, mining, getting more and more land brought into cultivation, — this is our first obvious elementary duty

to the country, and this we are beginning to see, without any pressure from without."

"And is this all?" said Oakfield, in rather a disappointed tone; "is the English message to India civil engineering simply?"

"Not quite," said Mr. Middleton, good-humoredly, "but it is an important — I think *the* important part of it just now. At any rate the neglect of it has long been a just reproach to us. A few thousand miles more of Grand Trunk Road, ditto of Canals, and people will no longer be able to say, that, if the English were swept off the face of Hindostan to-morrow, the only trace they would leave behind would be the broken tobacco-pipes of their soldiers."

"At any rate they might add the cheroots of their officers," said Oakfield, pointing to Lieutenat Dacre, who was just throwing away the remains of the nineteenth and lighting the twentieth cheroot of the morning.

"How the man does smoke!" said Middleton, looking at him in wonder; "but to what we were saying, — depend upon it that road-making, and so on, is not a thing to be sneered at; to subdue physical nature is man's first great work everywhere; how the greatest of ancient people left their mark upon the face of the earth! and how has that, which you and I should call the greatest of modern nations, been doing the same in these last years. Nationally this is, I believe, our main business for the next forty years, the rest depends upon individuals. You have no idea what a blessing to a district a good officer is. He has great power, though less than he had (more 's the pity); and those under him have a real governor over them, better or worse as the case may be; but still a governor, which is a great thing gained for any people."

"But do you not contemplate a time when this government shall pass into the people's own hands?"

"Surely, I do contemplate it, but, I confess, as an infinitely remote event, of which, at present, it is I think impossible to detect any, the faintest symptom. The grand fault in our government has been and is, that it does *not* contemplate this, and does not therefore try to find out the causes which at present make it so utterly unfeasible. So long as government is thus indifferent, so long, I acknowledge, our national work in this country, at least a great part of it, is being neglected, not without national sin."

"Then you mean to say, that all the talk as to the magnificent work of civilizing Asia through British influence in India is —"

"Humbug in practice, and it has grieved many generous hearts before now to find it so. No, my dear sir, depend upon it, that the glorious epoch, the veriest commencement of realization of those great ideas you speak of, is far distant. The work of individuals in this country must be for our time, and I believe far beyond it, not to join in a triumphant advance, but to devote themselves for the sake of those who come after. Many die in the trench before the successful stormers pass over their dead bodies to the breach. It is an old figure, — but a very true one. Much silent toil to keep the actual machine of government going, and the British power in India firm, — this is the first thing, — but besides this, much silent, unheeded, unthanked toil, by which individuals must try to solve those problems which must one day be taken in hand nationally, if we would continue, but which will not be thought of while they can be postponed; that is, not for many a long year, — not till they have broken many brave hearts."

"And what are those problems, stated broadly?"

"First and foremost to ascertain what is the point at which the European and the Native mind begin to diverge. We all see the result, it proclaims itself to the stupidest;

complete separation in taste, in feeling, in religion, and apparent incompatibility. The fact, I say, is obvious to us all; from the civil magistrate who finds it utterly impossible to get the truth out of a witness, to the griff who knocks his bearer down for coming into the room with his head covered: but is the incompatibility not in little things only, in manners and taste, but in the most vital feelings of humanity? is this necessary, is it to be lasting, and is the language about our common brotherhood as false in theory as in actuality, or is there really some common ground of the same human nature, discoverable, though as yet not found, scarcely looked for? And if there is any such common ground, what is it? and where, as I said before, do the European and Asiatic mind begin to diverge? what is the small point of difference from which the two first tend towards such opposite poles? There is one great problem for you; the parent of a hundred others: a problem too which carries its unsolved mystery into every hour of your daily life. Look at that khidmutgar* there, carrying in the tiffin: he has been in my service ten years; I think him a good servant, but believe that he did cheat me yesterday, is cheating me to day, and will cheat me to-morrow. I really like the man, have an actual personal kindness to him, but I know that self-interest would tempt him away from me to-morrow; and that our connection will be to his mind a simple mercenary one to the end, and that no kindness or effort of mine can make it otherwise. Then again, our English society in India; why should it be a proverbial, and to so great an extent a true saying, that an Englishman leaves his morals at the Cape? why is English society in this country so wofully behind all European society elsewhere? Here is problem number two; easier to solve, I admit, for some of the causes are very obvious, but hardly less important."

* Khidmutgar, the common name for table attendant.

"You have given me a different impression of India, and life out here, certainly," said Oakfield, "and there is a great sound of truth in what you say, disappointing as it is."

"Not more disappointing, believe me," said Mr. Middleton, in a sad tone, as he stopped in his quarter-deck career, and looked down upon the water, "not more disappointing than all life is. We start with fervor in other lines besides this Indian work, and in all we shall find, not that our fervor is wasted, — God forbid, — but that it must vent itself in silent, painful, perhaps apparently unfruitful work, not in the grand triumphal march we had pictured to ourselves. You must excuse me," he added, "if I seem to speak more seriously than our short acquaintance warrants, but I perceive," touching his own crape-covered hat, and glancing at the black band on Oakfield's arm, "that we have been to the same school lately, and this is a great letter of introduction."

"I assure you," said Oakfield, warmly, "I feel greatly indebted to you; I have had, hitherto, merely vain, shadowy dreamings about India; that there was something to be done which was not done, much to be undone that was done; but you have given me the first glimpse of a distinct idea; it is a great satisfaction, a great help, to hear any one talk of this country as one thinks an Englishman should do, for really I have been disgusted to find how many speak of it as though it were no more to them than that carcass floating along there is to the vultures feeding on it."

They went into the cabin, where they found their three fellow-passengers sitting down to tiffin.

"Well, Mr. Malone," Mr. Middleton began, "I suppose you have been busy as usual all the morning?"

"True, sir, true; the press is a mighty engine, sir; we don't let the grass grow under our feet."

"What, are you writing a book?" blundered out Lieu-

tenant Dacre, as he took the second wing off the unhappy-looking duck before him.

Mr. Wallace, seeing the Irishman's embarrassment at this home-thrust, good-naturedly came to the rescue. "That 's rather a leading question, eh, Mr. Malone? and yet," he said, going on to get off an awkward subject, "I wonder there are not more authors in this country, too; there is an extraordinary proportion of men of comparative leisure, and there is certainly plenty to write about."

"And pray, sir, why don't you set a good example?" asked the incorrigible Malone, who could not resist the temptation to catechise others, though he so evidently disliked it himself.

"That 's rather ungrateful of you, Mr. Malone," replied the clergyman, laughing, "to put me in the confessional when I have just delivered you from the hands of the Philistines," — glancing at Lieutenant Dacre, who had, however, entirely lost all interest in the conversation during his devotion to the curry, — "but, however, how do you know I don't write? My great work on the 'Antiquities of India,' or 'Travels in the East,' or what not, may be 'in the press, and shortly to appear,' at this minute, for all you know."

Mr. Malone, who had a suspicion that he was being laughed at, and did not at all like the notion of being chaffed by the parson, shook his head and said, "I beg your pardon, sir, but it strikes me that Travels and that style of thing are rather out of your line; if I were you, I would write a book about my own trade."

"Perhaps," suggested Oakfield, "Mr. Wallace considers that a book of travels might come within the limits of his trade, as you call it."

The clergyman looked pleased.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Malone, "what would your poor dear papa have said, Mr. Oakfield, if he had heard

you say that gadding was the business of a clergyman! No, no," he continued, shaking his head with an air of delightful self-complacency, and in a solemn tone which he thought became "*religious discourse*," — "I honor religion, sir; I say always, 'Stick to religion,' and depend upon it those new-fangled notions that some of the papers get hold of now-a-days — what I call latitudinarian views, and nothing better — will be the ruin of the country. Excuse me, sir," turning to Oakfield, "but I did n't like the sound of what you said about clergymen and travels; it had a latitudinarian twang, sir. What I say is, let all things be done decently and in order. I respect the clergy, but let us have them in their proper sphere. If the clergy begin dabbling in things out of their sphere, — excuse me, sir," turning to Mr. Wallace, "I allude to what Mr. Oakfield said, nothing at all personal, — down goes the Church; and if the Church goes down, the aristocracy goes with it; and then you know — "

"Well, sir?" said Mr. Middleton, seeing he paused, as if the conclusion was obvious, "Well, sir? — "

"O, why then, you know, sir, down goes the country."

"Well, but, Mr. Malone," said Mr. Middleton, who had been much amused at the foregoing harangue, delivered with all due oratorical arm-flourishing and table-thumping, "what do you consider the proper sphere of the clergy? Because, you know, if we are all a house of cards, with them for the foundation, we should look sharp after them."

"I must say," said Mr. Wallace, "I think there 's a great deal of truth in what Mr. Malone said."

"There comes the cloven hoof peeping out," whispered Mr. Middleton to Oakfield; "let us go on deck."

"I don't know that I should quite agree with you, Mr. Malone," Mr. Wallace continued, "in so limiting a clergyman's sphere of action; for surely there is no subject which is not capable of being happily brought within the general

influence of the Church; but I very much agree with what you say about the mutual dependence of the Church and aristocracy on each other, and the country on both."

"O, beyond a doubt, sir. Church and State, the very keystone of our glorious constitution; but, sir, may I be allowed to ask, — *are* you writing for the press?"

"Why, really, Mr. Malone, you must let me remind you how very obviously you objected to that question when put to yourself; however, I have no objection in telling you that I *have* been more or less employed lately in that way, having been for some time without any direct ministerial charge, though not on the subjects alluded to in jest."

"Ah!" said Mr. Malone, whose inquisitiveness was now thoroughly uppermost in him, "a theological treatise, I presume?"

"You may call it so, sir," said Mr. Wallace, insensibly warming into the glow of author-vanity at finding a willing and even pressing auditor; "you spoke so sensibly, sir, and, I may add, so *rightly*, of the Church just now, that I have less scruple in admitting to you that I am preparing a work on the Church in India; endeavoring to show how entirely all state progress in this country depends upon a deliberate orthodox establishment of the one true Church."

"To be sure, sir, to be sure; very right, very proper," said Mr. Malone, who, having got the clew, thought he could fancy all the rest. The fact was, Mr. Malone had been very steadily imbibing Lieutenant Dacre's brandy and water for a considerable period, and began to be more emphatic than was at all necessary. "Very right, sir; stick to the Church, and damn dissent!"

Poor scandalized Mr. Wallace jumped up as if he had been shot. "I must say, sir," he began, but, looking at his companion's flustered, excited countenance, he saw how matters stood, and, regretting his misplaced confidence, prudently left the cabin.

"What a thousand pities it is," he said, joining Oakfield and Mr. Middleton on deck, "that a clever man like that, who can think and speak so well at times, should be the victim of that degrading habit of drinking!"

And what an extraordinary thing it is, perhaps Oakfield might have said to himself, that you, a good man, and sensible on the whole, should allow yourself to be imposed upon by such a fellow as that Irish adventurer, merely because he utters a few sentences of your own sectarian slang!

Meanwhile Mr. Malone and Lieutenant Dacre were left to themselves and the brandy.

"I say," said Mr. Malone, "I made a mistake there, — sorry for it; very wrong to swear before a parson; I think I'll apologize."

"By Jove!" said the taciturn Lieutenant, "you talked like a parson yourself at first; how you did go on about Church and aristocracy, and Lord knows what else." And the youth, gazing with admiration at his gifted companion, lit another cheroot, and relapsed into silence.

"Why, you see," Mr. Malone replied, accepting a cheroot from Lieutenant Dacre's proffered case with a practised readiness, "you see a man of the world should be able to talk to parsons as well as other people; a parson, sir," relapsing into his conversational style, "is a gentleman by his cloth, and though, from what I've seen in this country, a man might easily afford not to know them out here, yet at home a clergy acquaintance is very respectable. Besides, you see," lowering his voice to a more confidential key, "I find it all in my line to draw people out; how am I to write about the clergy of this country without facts to go upon? Why, sir, Mr. Wallace there will make a capital subject: 'The Anglo-Indian Clergy,' we may say, 'a dignified, pious, hard-working body, but unhappily almost universally infected with the Tractarian leaven.'"

"Ah!" said Mr. Dacre, "you mean Puseyites and all that; well, I don't know much about them, but I should have thought that the padrés I've seen out here did n't care much about that sort of thing either way; however, I'm rather tired of talking about parsons; take some more brandy and water."

Mr. Malone looked with scarcely disguised contempt upon his entirely unintellectual companion; he made him more his confidant than anybody else, because he liked to talk about himself, and Lieutenant Dacre he thought was too great a fool, and too lazy, to remember what he was told, or repeat it if he did; and he also liked his brandy and water and cheroots.

These two men were very much alike in their sensual developments, and yet, because Mr. Malone was rather a clever man, he felt himself fully able to despise his companion, who was a blockhead. Strange, but stranger still that he really was far the better man of the two, even by the force of that rather low intelligence. Stupidity is always worse than wit, when both are dissevered from principle.

We will leave these two smoking and drinking, Mr. Malone holding forth the while in a fervent strain of continued self-glorification, and join the other three passengers, who were again reduced to the sailor's pastime of walking the deck. Oakfield and Mr. Middleton, it will be remembered, had left the cabin when Mr. Wallace began his white-tieish disquisition, and had resumed the conversation which tiffin had interrupted.

"Well," said Oakfield, after Mr. Middleton had gone over what he had said before, "I understand your two problems, and admit their absorbing importance, but have you any clew to hold out towards the solution?"

"The solution of a problem like that can hardly be stated categorically; it is the work of our lives, of yours and mine,

to solve it; or rather to make some approach to it, for he who really does solve it will be the great man of India. The solution of it will be a revelation made to us by some man of genius; the great business for ordinary honest workers is pioneering, trying to clear away some of the jungle of falsehood and absurdity which might stop the hero, or impede him, when he does come."

"I confess," Oakfield replied, "that there seems to me the old want in all this, a want of capability of being practically applied. I came out to this country with vague general notions of a great work of civilization and reform, calling for laborers, and so on; but I find this notion fade entirely away before the stupid realities of daily life; and now you tell me of problems to be solved and falsehoods to be protested against; and I recognize, as I said before, a ring of truth in your language; I follow you as you go along, but when I say to myself, how am I to apply all this problem? how do you work at it? when? where? — "

He spoke impatiently and stopped abruptly.

"Do not confuse yourself with that word 'practically,'" said Mr. Middleton in a quiet voice, contrasting with his companion's vehemence; "the practical business of your life is always to do the duty before you well; that sounds old enough, — and it *is* old and true; my practical business is to do my magisterial district work well, yours principally to do your officer's work well, — better, let me tell you, than it is often done by those of your cloth, if report says true; but you must have, if your life is to be worth anything, you must have an idea to be looked upon as a fixed star, far beyond, yet guiding and influencing your practical every-day business. The idea of a man's life cannot be reduced to a mere tangibility, which is what is generally meant when people clamor for 'something practical'; it is not that which you can take in hand any morning, take a day's work at, and

have done with; still less is it anything fanciful or unreal. It is most real; it is what you must work at always; work at nothing without working at it; you should labor to become so imbued with it that it may color your least actions almost without your being conscious of it: practical! all your practice should be nothing else than a constant hammering out of your idea. See now: we have reduced, for shortness' sake, the question of our position in India here into two main heads; the existence or non-existence of a radical sympathy between the European and Asiatic man, and the cause of the degraded state of English society out here, with the means of cure; if you are prepared to look at the thing in this light, to adopt these questions as your own, then I say get them so impressed upon you, or something equivalent to them, that there may be a centre round which all your busy life shall revolve. If you get up every morning thinking 'this is what I am set to find out,' if you carry this into your work, into all your dealings both with society and the natives, you will find it practical enough, — never fear."

"In short, have fixed ideas as the religion of one's work."

"Exactly so, but the word 'fixed' is incorrect, though I believe I used it in the same way myself just now. These two questions which I have stated, or any other two or two hundred questions which you may state for yourself, will not remain *fixed;* or if the nucleus of them is fixed, rooted in Eternal Truth, their halo, which is to you their principal feature, will be ever changing color; as you think you have grasped it, dissolving into some other shape or hue: this is not to be regretted; — motion, or progress, though the word has been injured by cant, is the salt of the soul's life; if we had a finite object we might reach it, and stop, and stopping, decay; — but as it is, forward! — I say at any rate," Mr. Middleton resumed in the same animated tone, pacing the deck with a firmer, quicker step, — "at any rate, in God's

name think *something;* hope something; look forward to something. The most Utopian dream that ever deceived an enthusiast, if believed, kept in view, and steadily steered for, makes the dreamer better and wiser than those sober-minded men who shape their course merely so far as the fog-bank clearing up day by day enables them to do. But join a clear vision to sober-mindedness: exercise your reason, your judgment, even your taste, for it is permitted you in selecting an object; but selected, believe in, and make for it. If you like my view of life in India, take it; if not, then another; but take one: I do not say that all are equally true, but all are truer than none. To go through life without an idea at all, that is latitudinarianism, and a hateful, ruinous vice it is."

"What are you saying about latitudinarianism?" asked Mr. Wallace, who had by this time joined them with the soliloquy recorded above; "ah, yes, sir, it is the vice of the age."

Mr. Middleton immediately shut up; he was naturally a reserved man, though the reader may be inclined to think otherwise, from his openness with Oakfield; but there was a subdued earnestness about this latter's manner and countenance, which bore, more forcibly than his mourning costume, the mark of his late sorrowful vigils; there was too a frankness, and a desire for truth and for help, so manifest in his unaffected tone and words, which, combined with his youth and profession, made a great impression upon Mr. Middleton, himself an honest, able man, well known in the service as a first-rate officer, winning respect and popularity amongst all his neighbors at every station he went to, by his well-known literary taste, and above all by that powerful spell of unfussing (pardon the word), strong earnestness which is always admired, though seldom recognized for what it is, by the poor majority, who feel painfully the burden of their own

bustling idleness. Mr. Middleton had been rather more excited than was usual with him, in the latter part of his conversation with Oakfield, and did not feel disposed for the wet blanket of orthodoxy; his first impulse was to sheer off altogether; reflecting, however, on the questionable civility of such a step, and the unfairness of deserting Oakfield, he faced about again and said, "We were agreeing, Mr. Wallace, or at any rate I was asserting, and I think Mr. Oakfield was inclined to agree with me," (Oakfield nodded,) "how essential it is for a man to get some prevalent idea to start with, and to steer upon, and were also discussing India and its prospects, and our position in it. Rather grand questions, Mr. Wallace, are they not, to be disposed of summarily on the quarter-deck of a Ganges steamer?"

"The prospects of India," echoed Mr. Wallace, "surely they depend upon the prospects of the Church in India."

"Then they must be rather gloomy."

"Gloomy they certainly are," said Mr. Wallace, "but improving. The better spirit in church matters which has been abroad lately has not been without its effect even in India."

"You mean, I suppose, by the Church in India," said Mr. Middleton, "the ecclesiastical establishment in this country?"

"I mean the Church, the one true Church of England, as legally appointed in this country, with its three essential orders of Bishop, Priests, and Deacons!"

"And you mean that the chaplains and assistant chaplains, some thirty clergymen scattered over this large presidency, are the main influence by which India is to be regenerated?"

"I certainly believe, sir, and so, I trust, do you also, that Christianity is the great means by which what you call the regeneration of India (though I rather demur to the term) is to be effected."

"In the first place," Oakfield observed, "are Christianity and the ecclesiastical establishment of the Bengal presidency convertible terms?"

"You do not mean to deny, I trust, sir, that the ecclesiastical establishment is a Christian establishment?"

"Come, come," said Mr. Middleton, "that is hardly a fair interpretation of Mr. Oakfield's question, which was a very pertinent one; but passing that, I would not shrink from saying that Christianity is, in my opinion, *not* the main instrument to be used; that is, in the first instance."

"Good God, sir! — I ask pardon for using such an expression, — but really, sir, do you call yourself a Christian, that you use such language?"

"I trust so," said Mr. Middleton, quietly; "but I certainly should not be one, if I thought Christianity was or could possibly be at variance with truth."

"Christianity is truth, sir."

"But all truth is not Christianity," said Oakfield.

"Your Oxford logic comes in very much to the purpose," said Mr. Middleton, laughing; "depend upon it, sir, that Christianity, which is the highest truth and the highest wisdom, will never be found at variance with a *fact*, or allied in any way with foolishness."

"How do you mean at variance with a fact?"

"I would ask you, Has Christianity had any effect upon this country, — I do not mean in individual cases, but at all, nationally, — does it have any effect?"

"It has not had a fair trial."

"I grant you; but if the Church Missionary Society sent out an army of missionaries, do you really think that it would have much — that it would have *any* — effect upon the natives?"

"I should not select the Church Missionary Society to make the experiment."

"O, I forgot," said Mr. Middleton, impatiently, "you consider them unorthodox; well, for Church Missionary read Propagation Society, and then —"

"Then I do think the conversions would become numerous to an extent you at present can hardly imagine."

"I doubt the fact; but admitting it, what are your conversions? You convert them to a creed, and make them — what? at best, the same respectable, mammon-worshipping, godless men that so large a majority of our own Christian countrymen are. Admitting you could do this, — a most liberal, and as I think gratuitous admission, — you have only done worse than nothing. Christianity is to you and me — it was once to a world — the greatest conceivable, the most powerfully constraining motive to men to become religious; but then Christianity was the Evangel, the good tidings, essentially the new impulse, the strange radical intruder upon old ideas; to say that the Christian *creed* (only mark the difference between the two words — evangel and creed), as now daily and controversially insisted upon by a few professors, is the same thing as Christianity announced to, and emphatically received by, a whole world, is to deny fact, — is adverse to truth, and therefore adverse to Christianity itself."

"Oh! I see, sir; you are one of those who look upon Christianity as a bygone, exploded thing, all very well in its day, but too slow for this enlightened nineteenth century."

Oakfield waited with some anxiety for Mr. Middleton's reply.

"God forbid," he said solemnly, "that I should think so; but I do think that the age of dogmas and creeds is gone by; at any rate, their power is gone, even if their ghosts remain for our sins, to irritate and perplex mankind."

"And yet you say that Christianity is not the great influence by which the Indian people is to be affected."

"In the first place, most assuredly not; Christianity is not a piece of conjuring, which you only have to announce, for its magical effects to appear. It is a wonderful development of intellectual and spiritual life, which those who have no such life, or only in the smallest possible degree, can neither appreciate nor need. To preach Christianity to the natives of India, is to begin at the end. Physical improvement first, then intellectual, then spiritual, — that seems the natural order of things; and if it is the natural order, that is to say, the true one, fixed by the laws of the universe, then whole universities of missionaries will not alter it."

"Well, Mr. Middleton, I am surprised to hear you talk so; you can hardly expect me, as a clergyman, either to agree, or discuss the matter further with you on this ground. I confess I have been accustomed to regard God's truth, as revealed in the Christian religion, to be of universal application through the instrumentality of the Church. I thought that what all good men looked forward to for India was the admission of its people into the bosom of that Church; I have even been accustomed to anticipate a time, distant though it may be, when the towers and spires of the outward temples of God shall mark the face of this land, emblematical of the inward temple which shall be in the hearts of its converted inhabitants; but you seem to think all this a consummation not to be looked, scarcely to be hoped, for."

"I am sorry we got on the subject," said Mr. Middleton to Oakfield, as the good clergyman, deeply moved, walked away; "I might have known I should shock him, however careful: and yet I am sure I did not wish to, for he, too, has an idea, though a strangely impracticable one to my mind. However, we have had enough of this for one day, and perhaps too much. I am not always such a sermonizer, Mr. Oakfield, as you may think from the way you have heard me going on to-day."

Oakfield smiled. "You have preached greatly to my satisfaction, I assure you, — and yet I was not quite prepared for what you said on this last subject. I should be grieved indeed to think that you should give up Christianity because you believe in religion, as seems to be so often the case now-a-days; and that, perhaps, because so many do not believe in religion who profess Christianity. And yet surely I do and will believe that Christianity is the highest truth we are yet capable of knowing."

"Be assured I think so too; only it is still subject to the conditions of humanity, and it is doing no service to sacrifice fact to it; it must be sought out by human means, and when spread abroad, if it is to be worth anything, grounded upon honest foundations deeply laid in human nature; and it takes a long time, and far other means than Church missionary societies afford, to lay these. And that Christianity should be spread over Asia as it was over Europe, as a matter of opinion at best, generally as a mere superficial fashion of speech, seems to me not a desirable object, but one most entirely to be dreaded, one which all honest people should labor to prevent, even though they should seem to many good men, like Mr. Wallace, for instance, to be no better than infidels for so doing. But I say I positively will not preach any more"; and he turned round rather abruptly, and entered the cabin.

Here they all met again at dinner, and sat late listening to Mr. Malone, who was in one of his most amusing moods. He was certainly rather under the influence of brandy, but only sufficiently so to develop his brogue, sharpen his wits, and perhaps slightly diminish his caution about himself, which was more an assumed habit than a natural peculiarity.

He talked with an air of intimate acquaintance of the principal London journals, and was so well informed in the mysteries of newspaper "shop" that it was evident he had been connected in some way with one or more of them.

He spoke familiarly of "Barnes," "Wilkinson," "Walter," and other editors, and hinted at the great esteem in which they all agreed to hold him, Malone. He delighted in the peerage, introduced the name of an earl or a marquis in every story he told, rolling out the full title with an unctuous enjoyment, and inserting the pedigree and family history in parenthesis; still evinced the same wonderful partial acquaintance with everybody, so that scarcely a name could be mentioned which he would not recognize, and ferret out of his marvellous memory some trait of the actual owner of it, or at least describe some near relation; he hinted at the importance of his present literary labors, and the castigation which he had inflicted, or was about to inflict, upon divers individuals and institutions in India; spoke in continual glorification of, firstly, himself, — secondly, the aristocracy, — thirdly, the fourth estate: which two last were jumbled up in his affections in a queer, incongruous fashion, so that it might be said of him, that his flunkeyism and love of titles made him a stanch Tory in profession, while his self-interest led him continually into most ultra-radical declamations on the power and splendor of the press. He still carried out his principle of adapting his conversation to his auditors with a clumsy and most amusing palpability; "talked religion" to Mr. Wallace, who, however, had become cautious since the unfortunate result of confidence at tiffin; spoke of India to Mr. Middleton, making remarks upon the country which evinced the strangest combination of shrewd observation and profound ignorance; discussed the respective merits of different cheroots with Lieutenant Dacre; while to Oakfield he still enlarged upon his "poor papa," his own magnificent prospects, and the capability of improvement that there was in the "Leatheburn estates."

Altogether Oakfield enjoyed his voyage up the Ganges, and was sorry when they came to Allahabad: the climate

was perfect, Mr. Malone was amusing, the clergyman kind and gentlemanly, the Lieutenant perfectly innocuous, and Mr. Middleton one whom he was most sorry to part from.

They reached Allahabad in the middle of January, just at the time when the great annual fair is held at that most holy spot, where the waters of the Ganges and the Jumna join.

The confluence of two large rivers is always striking; that of the Ganges and Jumna, in particular, seems to bring before the mind the one greatest feature in the geography of Northern India; but now this interest was almost lost in the marvel of the enthusiastic thousands who from all parts of India were gathered together to the worship of the sacred streams.

"Look at us here," said Mr. Middleton to Oakfield, "on board this steamer, and there at those multitudes, engaged in their harsh-sounding, unpleasing, but animated devotion, and you will see the problem we were speaking of the other day, stated broadly enough. What an inconceivable separation there apparently and actually is between us few English, silently making a servant of the Ganges with our steam-engines and paddle-floats, and those Asiatics, with shouts and screams worshipping the same river: the separation, I say, is obvious and quite tremendous. Is there any common ground underneath it?"

Oakfield looked thoughtfully at the new, strange scene. "Yes," he answered; "there is thought for a lifetime in that question, I believe; main-spring strong enough to set in motion a long chain of work; I have to thank you very heartily, Mr. Middleton, for giving me some distinct shape in which to put the question of life."

"Well," he added, "we must go ashore, I suppose; shall I meet you at Berrill's hotel?"

"No; I am going to stay with a friend, and shall go on

as soon as I can lay a dák;* there is no knowing, Mr. Oakfield, how short or how long a time it may be before we meet again in the Northwest, but if ever you do come to Ferozepore, it will give me very sincere pleasure to renew the friendship which has begun so pleasantly."

The obvious sincerity with which this was spoken, and the use of so strong a word as friendship from a reserved man, was very pleasing to Oakfield. They shook hands warmly and parted.

"Good by, sir, good by!" These words, spoken in the loud, Irish, unmistakable tones of Mr. Malone, startled Oakfield, as he stood looking, in a pondering way, over the side of the vessel. "Good by, sir! Remember me to your good mamma when you write. I dare say I shall see her before you do, and shall tell her that I had the pleasure of meeting you, and what a steady young man you seemed. Good by, sir!" And off he went to the dák bungalow, while Oakfield betook himself to Berrill's hotel.

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* Dák means post. Laying a dák is having relays of bearers stationed at stages ten or twelve miles apart, to take up the traveller's palanquin and carry it forward without delay.

CHAPTER IX.

"One year has now elapsed
And time has laid his hand upon this scene.
Once more the memorable village rears
Her peaceful walls and unpolluted cells;
And o'er those plains which charging squadrons shook,
Where iron tempests rained, the simple ploughshare
With its steer has passed, and smiling crops invite
The reaper's toil."

P.

Lines written at Ferozeshah, one year after the battle of that place.

When Oakfield reached Berrill's hotel, he heard the great news which was then in the very act of traversing India, that the Sikhs had been finally repulsed beyond the Sutlej, and the British dominion effectually asserted on the frontier, by the decisive action of Sobraon. He heard that the army was to be immediately broken up; but the destination of regiments was not yet specified. He waited, therefore, at Allahabad, to hear where his own corps should be ordered to, and meanwhile expected, with some anxiety, accounts from Stanton, to whom, since his departure from Hajeepoor, he had written several times without receiving any reply. At last the following epistle came, to set his friendly fears at rest.

"Lahore, 21st February, 1846.

"My dear Oakfield:—

"I really am ashamed at not having written to you before; and I am afraid to think how savage you must be! Thank you, my

dear fellow, for the kind notes I have received from you. You will forgive me when you have experienced, as I hope you will some day, how great a bore it is sitting down to write long letters in camp; and more especially during the excitement and difficulties of a campaign.

"I had resolved to give you a good long letter when all this business was over, but after trumpeting each action as it occurred, for the gratification of my anxious friends at home (my own share in each forming of course the pith of the narrative), you may conceive how disagreeable it must be to go over the story immediately for the third or fourth time. But now, while our gallant old chief is in the act, as they will say at home, 'of dictating peace under the walls of Lahore,' and we are permitted, for the present, 'to repose on our laurels,' I will endeavor to give you a sketch of what has occurred since you last heard of me, at Umballa, and of the scenes I have passed through in our march to this place.

"My troop, as you know or ought to know from the papers, marched with the force from Umballa, on the 11th of December. How delighted we were with the near prospect of our long-talked-of encounter with the Sikhs! and when we heard, a few days afterwards, that they had actually had the presumption to cross the river, and threaten Ferozepore, and were at that moment hovering over the country, only a few miles ahead of us, like a swarm of locusts, there was one grand prayer throughout the camp that they only would not — go back again! I laugh at *our* presumption now.

"Well: I pass over our six days' forced marching: there was enough to cheer us on for sixty, if it had been necessary. The Loodeana force joined us, as you know, on the evening of the 17th. The next evening proved to us the incalculable advantage of this movement, and how disastrous the consequences might, and probably would have been, of the Sikhs attacking, as they undoubtedly should have done, either of these positions of the army singly.

"Our march on the morning of the 18th was diversified by the presence of parties of the enemy's horse. These were driven in as we proceeded, and as our advance guard entered the town of Moodkee, about one o'clock, the garrison of the small fort there very quietly took its departure. Each regiment had halted in its position, for encamping, in the line marked out for the army; and

we (the artillery), after picketing our horses, had assembled, now about half past two, P. M., to refresh ourselves, after our long morning's march, with some mess stores which very opportunely made their appearance. Poor old General Sale joined us at this moment, and we were in the middle of rather an exciting debate about the probability of our being soon in contact with the Sikhs, when suddenly the whole camp was startled by the 'alarm' from drum and trumpet; and the intelligence flew along the line, that the enemy was advancing in force upon us. Up we all sprang: on went our jackets again; while our tired horses were harnessed quicker than they had ever been before; and, accompanied by the cavalry on either flank, the horse artillery and field batteries dashed to the front. I remembered and again experienced my feelings on first going into action, some years ago, at Maharajpore. How the cheek burns and the heart leaps at the thought that the scenes now about to be witnessed, and the deeds now to be done, may become for ever memorable! And besides this there is, as others know as well as soldiers, a stern satisfaction in meeting a duty that may be full of pain and peril, but is certainly one of self-denying vigor. On arriving at a belt of jungle, some distance from camp, we found ourselves under the fire of the enemy's guns. Here we halted and opened in return. Meanwhile the infantry was advancing. The principal circumstances of this eventful evening you are already acquainted with, from the despatches and other accounts in the newspapers, so I will not fatigue you with all that happened to my particular troop. It was quite dark when the engagement was over, and as yet we could only guess that the day was in our favor. We heard the horse artillery 'recall,' and, following the direction, soon fell in with some other troops of horse artillery and cavalry, on their way back to camp. This is always the depressing part of the business, when inquiries come to be made, and while the 'glory' of our success is still obscured by the immediate suffering of those about us, who are not destined to share in it. We made our way slowly back to camp; our gun-carriages and wagons now laden with the wounded and dying.

"The two next days were passed in a defensive attitude and preparing for a decisive co-operation with the Ferozepore garrison. At four o'clock on the morning of the 21st the army was in mo-

tion. The strength of each division and its position for the march of attack on the following day had been all notified the evening previous. It was pitch dark at the hour I have mentioned, and we had no small difficulty in getting into our place. 'Do you see that star?' said an aide-de-camp, in answer to the inquiries of our captain, as we were moving from our pickets, not knowing exactly where to go; 'well, follow its direction, and you will come upon the rear of Gilbert's division.' As we moved along, the low indistinct hum from black, motionless masses, or the faint tramp of passing regiments, was all we could distinguish. Soon the dawn brought everything into order, and the army commenced its march. At noon there was a long halt, and we received the gratifying intelligence that the hitherto beleaguered force in Ferozepore had given the enemy the slip, and were within hail. We now appeared to turn off almost at right angles from our former course, and after moving some distance to the right, the horse artillery were ordered to the front and the infantry deployed into line. The army now advanced to that memorable attack, and soon the roaring of the guns from the Ferozepore division assured us of the presence of the enemy. Again I must refer you to official sources for the particulars of the severe combat which ensued. Our small field-guns, as you must have heard, proved to be incapable, either from their position or their force, of silencing the batteries of the enemy, which seemed to sweep almost every yard of the ground we advanced over. Night closed in, but not, as usual, with our army alone in possession of the field.

"I shall never forget that night; it was bitterly cold; we were all tired, hungry, and thirsty, but there was not a drop of water to be got, even for the wounded. We collected some sticks together and made a small fire, and those poor wretches near us who were able crawled, some of them to die, beside it. If men spoke of the events of the afternoon it was with gloom, and we looked forward to what might transpire on the morrow with more hope than confidence. The rattle of musketry every now and then disturbed the silence, and almost apathy, into which we sank. Flashes from the Sikh intrenchment, where part of their camp was burning, lit up for a short space the dense darkness of the night, and the shades of the surrounding trees. Towards morning, in spite of the cold,

against which there was no resource, I somehow fell asleep. As soon as day broke we were in motion, and I will venture to say of all of us, that we never felt so anxious to be engaged with the enemy. We were not long in suspense. Tej Singh had moved from in front of the now almost deserted cantonment of Ferozepore, and his long line of troops was the first position of the enemy that attracted our attention this morning. Soon his guns opened upon us, and we (*i. e.* about four troops, H. A., and two field batteries) returned it while our ammunition lasted, and this was the severest fire I was under during the campaign. The ammunition left from yesterday's encounter being soon completely expended, we sheered off, fortunately in time to avoid being literally smashed! We withdrew to the left flank of the entrenchments, along which our infantry were now advancing, carrying everything before them.

"This severe engagement terminated at about three o'clock on the afternoon of the 22d of December; but before we were conscious of the result, though after the firing had ceased on both sides, the cavalry and artillery received orders to form up and move into Ferozepore. It now appears that the 'best authority' had not been obtained for this order, and the movement has in consequence been severely censured. However this may be, the movement of so large a body of cavalry and artillery apparently towards the enemy's right flank, had all the appearance of exercising no little influence on his counsels, for, either dispirited with the loss of his intrenchments and guns, or in despair at the appearance of another attack, the necessity and fact of his retreat from this moment became obvious. It was after sunset when we reached Ferozepore. Some of our horses dropped dead when we halted. They had had neither food nor water since the evening of the 20th, and this was the night of the 22d, with hard work throughout the whole time. In this condition and without a round shot in our ammunition-boxes, we could have been only an encumbrance to our troops in the field. It was quite dark when we had parked our guns. I sat down on one of them and soon found myself alone. 'How is this to end?' was the first thought that suggested itself to me; and on this I very fruitlessly cogitated for an hour or more. It was getting cold, however, and I had eaten and drunk nothing since the middle of the day previous. I entered the first tent I came to, for

the Ferozepore force had left their camp standing. A young fellow was lying on the bed delirious, with the stump of an arm still undressed, though shot off the day before, projecting from under the bed-clothes, beseeching a brother officer who sat by his side, in the most piteous accents, 'not to leave him on the field,' for his mind still wandered to that scene of horror. I soon hit upon a brother blue-jacket's tent, where I satisfied my craving appetite, and O the luxury of pulling off one's boots and *determining* to enjoy a few hours' undisturbed repose!

"Early the next morning, the 28th, the horse artillery, having refilled their ammunition-boxes from the Ferozepore magazine, rejoined, with the cavalry, the rest of the army, which was now in sole possession of the guns, the wounded, and the dead, which seemed to fill the intrenchments of Ferozeshah. The enemy were by this time some miles away in a precipitate retreat. I must carry you quickly over the time which elapsed, with only the brilliant little action of Alliwal intervening, with all the particulars and causes of this delay in our operations, from the morning after the bloodily-contested two days' battle which I have just sketched, until the evening before our crowning victory at Sobraon. You are aware of the nature and strength of the position which the Sikhs now occupied. The whole of the 9th of February was passed by the artillery in preparing shells and ammunition for the next day's contest. My troop moved from its pickets at about three in the morning, and, falling in with the division to which it had been attached by the orders of the night previous, we moved on slowly in the dark to occupy our position in the line of attack. This is not a time when one feels inclined to talk much; moving through the dark never is. The fires from our camp and the villages about threw a wildness over our movement; and as we proceeded on our way, the hum of preparation which floated over our large encampment gradually became less distinct. How fancies crowd upon the mind when there is nothing outward to satisfy the eye and ear!

"This day, we say, will become memorable for a glorious victory; no doubt, — but not to all! And then there is an effort to picture the scenes which are to follow, and to anticipate the events which must be revealed before the day closes. We

were in our position, and lying on the ground, some hours before the action opened. The morning was very foggy, but as the sun gained strength, the mist rose gradually like a curtain, opening to our view the high and well-constructed intrenchments of the Sikhs. Behind them the Sutlej flowed tranquilly, and the white banks of the opposite shore, fringed with trees, shut in the scene. As soon as the heavy guns in the centre opened their fire, the Sikhs seemed for the first time to be awakened to a full consciousness of their position; and I can imagine no more beautiful sight than must have presented itself to them when, on every side, as far as eye could penetrate the jungle, they watched in their immovable order the glittering ranks of the British army. For a short time only a continual roll of alarm from their drums betokened their surprise and the hurry of preparation, and then one after another each embrasure vomited its token of defiance, till erelong, as Sir Hugh Gough describes it, 'the roar of more than a hundred and twenty pieces of ordnance reverberated through the valley of the Sutlej.'

"The particulars of the day you know. The advance of Dick's division on the Sikhs' right was magnificent, and, as we know now, should have been the principal, and perhaps the only, point of attack. Our heavy guns of course, from their position, (thanks to those who had the placing of them,) could not do much either to ruin the Sikh defences or to lessen the fire from them. But how we peppered their masses as they retreated over the sinking bridge and through the river in rear of their position, after our infantry had gained an entrance and carried it at the point of the bayonet! The massacre was really frightful; too much so to tempt one to a detailed description of it. By two o'clock not a Sikh, I believe, was visible, except the dying and dead, who were lying in thousands in their intrenchments, or floating down the river. I must now bring this long account to a close. We crossed the Sutlej in pursuit at Ferozepore, as you know, and arrived at the capital of the Punjab yesterday morning. I believe we are to have a grand review here in a day or two, to show off our force to the Sikh court. It ought to be rather a good display, considering that we have a greater number of European regiments with the army than India has ever before seen together. And fancy, besides a very fine train of heavy guns drawn by elephants, and several field bat-

teries, eleven of our troops of horse artillery marching past, one after another, in review order! What would the Cockneys say to this, who flock in thousands to see a couple of regiments on parade, or half a dozen guns on Woolwich Common? Well, my dear Oakfield, I must really fold up this long-winded despatch. I hope you are satisfied with this amends for my past laziness. Meanwhile you have been witnessing death in a milder and perhaps a more impressive form. I thought when last I saw poor little Vernon that he was not long for this world.

"Believe me ever most affectionately yours,

"H. STANTON."

CHAPTER X.

"Hail ancient manners! sure defence
Where ye exist of wholesome laws:
Remnants of love, whose modest sense
Within a narrow room withdraws;
Hail usages of pristine mould,
And ye who guard them, Mountains old!"

WORDSWORTH.

It was some three or four months after Oakfield's landing at Allahabad, the month of June, which is to Indians the reign of terror, to those who sit at home at ease the first-fruits of delight, that an open carriage and pair might have been seen leaving the entrance of St. John's Vale on the right, and taking the road for Keswick. There were two grown people seated in the place of honor, opposite whom sat a boy some twelve or thirteen years old, whose youthful animation and high spirits contrasted strikingly with the calm expression derived from the smoothly-cut outline of his features and his silky dark hair; and the party was completed by two little girls, who stood and sat and climbed about quite promiscuously all over the carriage, consistent in nothing for two minutes together, except their continual, unflagging, laughing, loving happiness. That it was a party of pleasure was clear, and that in the fullest extent of the term, to all concerned. The elder lady, as she leaned back, listened with silent pleasure to the raptures of the little ones, herself ready to share in their enthusiasm at the surpassing and varying beauty which each turn of the road disclosed, —

the object of the conversation, the affection, the thoughtful attention of all, looked the very picture of tranquil enjoyment; the young lady, our old friend Margaret, had she been less pretty than she really was, with her graceful figure and soft complexion, dark hair, and the large, expressive eyes which characterized her family, would have looked beautiful to any one who had observed her with her mother and the little ones, evidently the friend and support of the former, the idol of the latter; while the same desire to please and amuse was tempered in the case of her brother by an unconscious tone of confidence and equality, which her delicate instinct taught her would be most soothing to the susceptible feelings of a Winchester boy of thirteen. But perhaps a narrow observer would have been most pleased with the genial and wholesome effect which the atmosphere of family love might be seen to have upon this boy. He was at home from Winchester for his first holidays amongst his mother and sisters, and must have been a very paragon of a boy had he returned exactly what he went. His watchful mother saw with hopeful anxiety symptoms here and there of decaying childhood and incipient manliness; and if it sometimes appeared that the strengthening, developing influence of public school discipline could not be altogether untainted by some concomitant coarseness, the stains were not so deep but that they altogether melted away before the grateful heat of home affection and home purity. If he was less ready than he would have been six months before to share in the childish games of his little sisters, his mother was rejoiced to see that he was not impatient of them, and that, after watching what a hearty playfellow Margaret was to them, he would swallow down the slight sticklings of dignity, and give himself up to the play of two little girls of five and six with an energy that would have astonished some of his friends in Commoners.

At the time we have introduced them, all five were engaged in what appeared to be a game of staring. The children, with a preternatural silence, looked as steadily as they could in one direction, such steadiness not being sufficient, however, to keep them from turning round about twenty times in a minute to exclaim, "Mamma, have you seen it?" Herbert, with a befitting earnestness, never once turned his eyes from the direction which seemed to have such attraction for them all; and as this direction was just in front of the horses' heads, Mrs. Oakfield and Margaret could join in the contemplation without the uncomfortable attitudinizing in which the little ones seemed to delight, and which poor Herbert bore with stoical patience. At last, "I see it!" said Herbert, in a tone that all his efforts could not prevent from being a shout.

"Herby's first, Herby's first," screamed Rose, her tiny face glowing with excitement through the long hair which had escaped from her straw hat and was flying about in most unartificial tresses. "Where, Herby?" she said, scrambling up to her brother's side.

"There it is," said Herbert, pointing to the little portion of Derwent Water which had just become visible; "we shall see the whole lake from the top of the next hill."

"Herby always sees things first," said Mary, rather dolorously.

As Herby had predicted, from the next hill the whole lake became visible, and now the eyes of all were fixed as they came to the brow overlooking Keswick. Mother, son, daughters, in all their different degrees of age, association, and sentiment, held their peace as they looked down upon the gorgeous silence of Derwent Water and Bassenthwaite valleys. Slowly did the careful post-boy descend the triangularly-cut, but still steep hill, so that our enthusiasts had

time to gaze their fill over the wonderful landscape; and it was not without a sense of relief that the sudden jerk as they pulled up at the turnpike to take the drag off, and then rattled on over the loud pavement, dispelled the almost solemn trance in which young and old had been wrapped as they descended the hill. Surely there is a great deal of religion in such hill-descendings; more, says Carlyle, than we most of us know what to do with. But Rose and Mary's religious admiration fits were not the less genuine that they were of brief duration, and by the time they had pulled up at the Queen's Head they were quite alive to the novelty of passing an hour or two at an inn.

Keswick is almost a byword with North-country travellers for a quiet rustic town, but to our North-country dwellers it was a noisy metropolis; — to all, except Mrs. Oakfield, who had seen much of the world before she found her peaceful home among the mountains, and Master Herbert, who had nothing to say for Keswick as a town, having seen not only Winchester, but the great London. Keswick was as big a town to Margaret as it was to Rose and Mary. They did not stay long at the inn, but went down to the head of the lake, and took a boat. It was a perfect day, calm and cloudless; the hills of Borrowdale had relaxed that stern expression which they often wear; the Catbells looked no more than great sunny slopes; Skiddaw "shrouded his double head," not in "Atlantic clouds," but in the soft haze of a summer sky; the blue lake and its wooded green islands made up the exquisitely finished miniature. Though it is but a dead metaphor to compare a beautiful scene like this to a picture; the charm does not consist in the mere shapes and colors which delight the eye, but in the moving, sounding water, the clear freshness of mountain air, the happy bounding life of man, and bird, and beast, all expanding to enjoy the purest and perhaps the most perfect of all earthly

pleasures, a fine day in a beautiful country. They were obliged to take a boatman to help Herby to row the party, otherwise Mrs. Oakfield would not have thought it necessary, on so calm a day, to hurt the latter's feelings by appearing to want any other protector; but as Herby himself said rather grandly, "I can never pull all of you to Lowdore and back, you know," and as Rose and Mary could not get the party to put proper reliance on their promise of assistance, they took with them one of the good-natured, strong-armed Backhouses or Tysons that stood on the wooden pier, to pull bow to Herby's stroke. The cushions were arranged, *the* basket stowed away under Herbert's superintendence, and off they went; Margaret steered at first, but, it must be owned, so widely, that her brother was obliged to ask her to unship the rudder: poor Mrs. Oakfield would have enjoyed the cool ripple of the boat in the blue silky water more thoroughly, had it not been for the purgatory of fear which Rose and Mary caused her. Regardless of injunctions to sit still, and Herbert's nautical, and to them utterly incomprehensible request, "to trim," they would clamber about the boat as they had done in the carriage. After all, the good, honest, broad-bottomed old tub was nearly as safe a play-room as the carriage; but Herby's distress at having the symmetry of his rowing destroyed by such unsailor-like conduct induced the good Margaret to get the two little girls to come and sit by her, and be told a story. It was a wonderful story, that of Margaret's, a standing chronicle of the fortunes of a little boy and girl, whose biographies had, since the time Margaret was herself a child, been continually receiving additional chapters. It had done its work for Edward, Margaret, and Herbert, and now the Boswellian mantle had descended from mother to daughter, who, for the benefit of the little ones, was ever leading the hero and the heroine into bewildering pre-

dicaments, till the compassionate little Mary's distress became so great that they were brought out again abruptly. This biography was a charm that could still the most troubled waters, so long as the hearers were only noisy, and it was wanted to quiet them; if they were naughty, which the dear little things of course were sometimes, it was never tried; it was mingled only with their "good" associations. So they sat down immediately, with ready attentive ears, to the great relief of Herby, and the amusement of the old boatman, who loved children, and admired this innocent dodge; and really these little things were not wrong to be enticed; it must have been very pleasant sitting at the bottom of that great, comfortable boat, sailing over Derwent Water, looking up to Margaret's soft eyes, hearing her gentle merry voice, as she made a most important and wonderfully unconnected addition to that marvellous story, though the subjects of it seemed in a bad way to get on in life, poor children, for they had reached the ages of eight and nine when Herbert deserted them for more authentic histories, and now the ruthless Margaret had pushed them back again to five and six, without the least compunction or regard to historical unity.

They reached Lowdore without let or hinderance, and observed, as they landed, another boat drawn up on the beach. This was not altogether a good omen, viewed selfishly; for the little white inn by the lake-side did not look as if it would accommodate two parties of pleasure, though we all know how these hospitable little white inns can stretch upon occasion. When they arrived, however, and had deposited their burden, *the* basket, they found that the other party was not of very formidable strength; only a widow lady and her two little girls. Rose and Mary pricked up their ears at the sound of two little girls. They were gone up to the Falls, the landlady said, and would be back to din-

ner at two o'clock. It was now half past twelve; the Oakfields had left Leatheburn very early in the morning, and they must get home to sleep.

"Well," said Herby, coming forward to take the business department, "we shall want dinner at three."

"Maybe you 'll dine together then, for you know, ma'am," turning to Mrs. Oakfield, to poor Herby's great discomfiture, "we 've only one room for visitors and tourists."

"You don't call us tourists, I hope, Mrs. Fleming," Margaret exclaimed half playfully, half with a sincere Westmoreland indignation at the odious word "tourist."

"No, Miss, — I don't; nobody 'll call the Oakfields of Leatheburn tourists, that have known and honored them as long as I and mine have, but you know, Miss, you 're gentle folk, — tourists or no, — and I 'll have to give you this room and no other."

"We must club dinners," said Herby, just recovering from Mrs. Fleming's slight.

"Well, sir, and I 'm thinking that 's what you had best do; you 'll meet the lady up at the Falls, ma'am, and you can speak to her if you think proper."

So this important matter being settled, they set out for the waterfall.

All readers of Southey and all lake travellers know "how the waters come down from Lowdore," so we need not try a description for the sake of the very small section not included in either category. They stood all silent at the bottom of that stupendous watercourse, mother and young daughters alike gazing in befitting, silent admiration; till Herby began to make his way up the bed of the Falls, a possible feat in the month of June, and then little Rose and Mary's shrieks of excitement as they watched him leaping from rock to rock, and their merry laugh, as he once missed his mark and came down knee-deep in the clear, rapid water,

rang out above the roar of the torrent, a melodious treble, all in harmony with the sonorous base of the cataract.

As they were returning to the little inn, after an hour's scramble among the rocks up the course of the fall, they fell in with the lady and the two little girls whom the landlady had mentioned; neither party was very formidable-looking to the other, so Mrs. Oakfield told Herby to go up, explain how matters stood at the inn, and ask leave to join the company. Herbert performed his mission with a grace that did credit to Wykehamist manners, and the arrangement was very soon made. The lady was travelling through the lakes, it appeared, with her two little girls; had just arrived at Keswick, and intended shortly to go into Scotland, "But not," she said, "before I have found out a family in this part of the world to whom I and my little ones here all owe a deep debt of gratitude." There was a tear in her eye as she spoke, — which, in connection with the deep mourning worn by herself and daughters, appealed directly to the sympathy of Mrs. Oakfield and Margaret. They were a cheerful party, however, in the little inn parlor, over the poached eggs and Westmoreland ham, provided in a style which only Westmoreland and Cumberland cooks wot of; indeed, it would have been hard to be melancholy, with Rose and Mary in company. They very soon struck up an intimacy with the two little strange girls, and were the first to break through the difficulty which all had felt from not knowing each other's names, a piece of information which with true English — shall we say politeness or awkwardness? — both parties had abstained from asking or communicating. Rose, however, had no such scruples.

"What 's your name, little girl?" she asked of her black-clothed, light-haired, blue-eyed playfellow.

"My name 's Emily," replied the ready little informant;

"and hers," pointing to her sister, "is Edith; Emily Augustus Vernon is my name."

"Vernon!" Margaret half exclaimed, as the name caught her ear, with a glance at her mother, who appeared equally struck; but their astonishment was small in comparison to that of Mrs. Vernon's when, in reply to Emily's return question, Rose introduced herself and her sister as Rose and Mary Oakfield.

It was now Mrs. Vernon's turn to speak. "Can it be the Mrs. Oakfield whom I have made my pilgrimage here to see? was it your dear son whom my Arthur so loved, and blessed on his death-bed, — my poor boy's one kind constant friend in that dreary country?"

Mrs. Oakfield had half guessed and now understood all.

"This is indeed a strange and happy meeting, Mrs. Vernon; we all feel as if we had lost a friend in your dear son, so much had we heard of him, and so often, from Edward; we had been wanting to send you some extracts from his letters, about the friend he loved so dearly, but did not know where to send them."

"He wrote to me himself long letters, the most precious of all my possessions, except these," pointing to the children, "and my little sailor; and I thank God I have been allowed to see and bless, as I have long prayed for, those who are nearest and dearest to him, that I may thank them, as well as poor words can, for that service of his so far beyond all thanks."

"It is not for a mother," said Mrs. Oakfield, as soon as she could find utterance, "to refuse to hear her son so lovingly spoken of; but I am sure, my dear Mrs. Vernon, that Edward would be, and is, very far from thinking that you or yours owe him anything for what would have been a natural duty, had it not been most truly a labor of love. We know, and I hope you will know when you see his letters, how

much this dear friend cheered — and indeed made, not bearable only, but prized and happy — those otherwise trying months of inexperience in India; we know how grateful he felt for the lesson of that last illness and happy death. It is most curious, in many ways, this chance meeting," continued Mrs. Oakfield, after a short interval; "this is our Edward's birthday, and our party is in his honor. Herby, my boy, I see you are all ready to propose your brother's health, and I do not think we need omit the ceremony on Mrs. Vernon's account." This was a great relief to poor Herby, who, deeply as he had been interested in the strange recognition, would have thought the day altogether incomplete had the time-honored custom of drinking the health of the hero of the birthday been omitted. If ever a relic of heathenism was transmogrified into a holy act, it was now; that little circle — the very room in which they were assembled — seemed impressed with one absorbing emotion of pure, self-forgetful love for an absent son, brother, friend. If Edward Oakfield, at that moment, in his hot garrison life, so far off, was oppressed by any temptation, surely there was help for him here, in this little lake-side room in Cumberland; surely, if there is any such truth as "a guardian angel," and "a communion of saints," there was here a power of love and purity which, defiant of space, might rise up against and overcome and drive back into the pit that enemy which would intrude itself, even on this solemn feast-day.

Shortly after dinner they all betook themselves to the boats again, and at Keswick the two parties separated, not however till Mrs. Vernon had agreed to come over the next day, to make a stay at Leatheburn; and the Oakfields set out on their journey home. The day, which had begun and continued in joy, ended in peace; scarcely a word was spoken; the little ones were asleep; Herby also inclined that way, after his rowing exertions; and Mrs. Oakfield and

Margaret sat watching the calm beauty of the summer night. The full moon had risen over Dunmail Raise, and now in her splendor was resting on the broad bosom of Skiddaw, silvering the rugged buttresses of Blencathera. What music was needed for this harmony of sight, the rushing brooks, as they crossed them from time to time, supplied; all was beautiful, and as they entered their own wood, just detecting through the trees the waters of Thirlwater, rippling and glistening in the moonlight, they heard the little clock of Leatheburn chapel tinkling out its twelve strokes, faintly echoed in the surrounding hills; and so ended the birthday.

CHAPTER XI.

"'Why, when the world's great mind
Hath finally inclined,
Why,' you say, Critias, 'be debating still?'
. . . . .
Critias, long since, I know
(For Fate decreed it so),
Long since the world hath set its heart to live,
Long since, with credulous zeal
It turns life's mighty wheel,
Still doth for laborers send."

Strayed Reveller, and other Poems, by "A."

We left Oakfield, in the beginning of March, at Berrill's hotel, Allahabad. He had been there only a few days when he heard that his corps, the 90th, was ordered from Meerut to Ferozepore. He left Allahabad as soon as possible, but heard, on reaching Meerut, that the regiment had marched seven days previously. While meditating, in his solitary room at the dák bungalow,* what to do next, he suddenly recollected that Stanton's troop was ordered to, and had by this time arrived at, Meerut, and forthwith sallied forth to discover the artillery lines. It was five o'clock, — a damp, gray, cold evening, — when he reached Stanton's quarters, and saw him through the glass doors of the bungalow, seated near a comfortable fire, in determined bachelor

* Small houses erected every forty or fifty miles along the great roads, where travellers may obtain shelter for twenty-four hours by paying a fee of one rupee.

costume, reading. That glance was suggestive of the life he had been leading for ten years; "Perhaps the life I have to lead, also," thought Oakfield; "well, there might be worse!" He rattled at the door, which, Indian fashion, did not shut without fastening. Stanton got up to open. "Who 's there?" he called out, not able to distinguish, as he looked from the cheerful light of his own room into the increasing darkness outside. "Oakfield! delighted to see you, my boy! — when did you come? — where are you staying? — your regiment has marched, you know; come in; — by Jove, old fellow, how glad I am to see you!" So in disjointed fashion, without waiting for a reply, he ran on, possessed by that most pleasing of all excitements, the first half-hour's meeting with an old friend: it was very soon settled that Oakfield was to send to the dák bungalow for his petarahs,* and stay with Stanton for about three weeks, and then proceed by dák to Ferozepore. "You 'll be there before the regiment," urged Stanton, in reply to Oakfield's suggestion, that perhaps he ought to join immediately, — "nobody expects a griff to join on the line of march with no horse, no tent, no nothing: I suppose, though, you don't consider yourself a griff any longer: you 're getting on, Oakfield; you 'll soon be qualified to take up your position among the Cades of this world; by the by, how is Cade?"

"Flourishing, I believe, — I hope so; I got half reconciled to all those fellows during Arthur's illness: the spark of humanity yet left in all of us blazed up a little, and its appearance softened my heart towards them."

"Humph! I suspect, with all your declamations against society, and so on, you 're a softer fellow than I am, Master Ned: depend upon it, you owe very little sympathy to Cade

* Petarahs; small boxes of wood or tin, a pair of which slung upon a pole, and carried by one man, generally make up the luggage of a dák traveller.

and that lot. However, *de mortuis*, — they are all as good as dead to you; for the chances are you never see any of them again; I advise you keep your softening moods for your new regiment."

"Did you see much of them when here?"

"Not much; I dined at their mess once or twice; they 've got a very good mess."

"And what do you think of them?"

"A good deal better than the 81st at any rate; they won't drive you away from the mess as Cade and Co. did."

"Well, but positively, without comparison, how did you like them?

"O, they were liked a good deal in the station, I believe."

"How did you like them?" Oakfield repeated, tacitly reproving the *answer indirect* by not taking any notice of it; the best way to treat that style of response, by the by.

"Why," said Stanton, laughing at the reproof, "I tell you I did n't see much of them, indeed very little; so had rather leave you to form your own opinion without any prepossessions, possibly false ones. Men do a lot of harm by sweeping, indiscriminate sentences upon regiments, very often knowing nothing about them the while. Your regiment has a good name in the service, which is a clear gain; and if your philosophy is rather tried by some of the popular doctrines of a crack corps, why it would be the same anywhere else. You must n't trust to your society in this country; nor anywhere, I believe, for that matter. Depend upon it that in our generation society will be a hinderance more than a help."

"I believe so, too," said Oakfield; "but in vastly different degrees; sometimes so slight a hinderance that a strong will may almost force it into a help, at any rate has little difficulty in overcoming it; sometimes, again, a hinderance which the strongest will hardly be able to live down; and must even cut and run for it."

"Well," replied Stanton, "it is, I believe, partly from constitutional temperament, partly from habit, that I cannot understand the importance you attach to society one way or the other. To govern one's self, to cherish one's own spiritual life, seems to be a task so essentially one's own, that a society of angels could scarcely make it easier, nor of devils harder. The constant companionship of the best men would not, I believe, make purity of heart or unselfishness more easy; good society, using of course the term in the farthest possible from its common acceptation, is doubtless very pleasant, but no more essential than other pleasant things which in this unpleasant world we must do without, or seek in the past, or in books; but depend upon it, that Heaven has willed that we should live, no less than die, alone."

"And do not you think that this very theory of isolation from others, living for yourself and dying for yourself, has in itself something selfish in it?"

"No," said Stanton, "not if fairly stated and rightly named; neither of which things have you done. Independence is very different from isolation, and living alone is a very different thing from living to one's self; — trouble you to state me more correctly, Master Ned."

Oakfield smiled. "And yet," he said, kicking a log of wood farther into the fire with his heel, "I think the distinction is more of words than anything else."

"I beg your pardon, sir. I, not being a Bachelor of Arts, do not deal in verbal distinctions; seriously, Oakfield, there is all the difference in the world, if you think of it. Isolated we cannot be if we would; the world drags us on, knitted so cunningly one to another, that we cannot be altogether dissevered if we would; it is impossible but that our words and acts should have some fruit, either for good or evil; nothing dies but it springs up again, somewhen and some-

where; we influence we know not whom, nor how; but we do influence others, and they us; we are not isolated, but independent we must be; to be warped unconsciously by the magnetic influence of all around, is the destiny, to a certain extent, of even the greatest souls; but to have the conscious life over which we do exercise control affected by other men, that is the sin of dependence, which to you, you say, is a grievous tempation; though I know, you good fellow, how bravely you resist it; to me, by no merit of mine, but by happy accident, I think less so than to most people."

"Of course," said Oakfield, "I agree with you that we must be independent, — that we do not live at all if we only follow a multitude, — whether it be to do good or to do evil, it is all one. We only differ then as to the difficulty of this independence."

"Even so: but, Oakfield, to show you that it was more than a verbal distinction which I drew just now —"

"Don't be malicious, I give in."

"No, but listen: do you remember our correspondence when you were at Hajeepoor, and your dwelling on the duty, or, as you said, the necessity, of separating yourself altogether from society?"

"Yes, perfectly; and I think still that, when society is below a certain degree of badness, entire separation is the only course open."

"Well now, I think that is just to confound, practically, independence and isolation: the latter is what you attempt (you cannot succeed) in separating yourself and hermitizing; and that is to live not *alone*, but for yourself; which, as you remarked, sounds — let me add *is* — selfish."

"What do you call living alone, then, as distinguished from living to one's self?"

"Why I think the distinction is very great, and the apparent resemblance consists merely in using the word 'live'

to express two very different things. A man who hermitizes *lives* to himself; that is, actually lives, eats, drinks, sleeps, thinks, walks about in his own sweet company; very good company for a season, but which, resorted to exclusively, day after day, becomes very infectious; a man catches the disease of self from this continued intimacy with himself. When I used the expression 'live alone,' quoting from Keble, I meant to live really; the inward, spiritual, true life. This life *cannot* have communion with fools, though the body which contains it may mix in their company, and though the courtesies and kindnesses of life may go on at the surface; underneath lies this life, which is not folly, but man's soul, than which it is not more impossible that God himself should mingle with folly. So long then as the majority of one's acquaintance are fools, one must, as far as they are concerned, *live* alone; not a pleasant, but a sorrowful necessity, from which the more the soul can escape, the happier. It escapes whenever it detects a soul with which to commune, that is in friendship; great men escape more than others, because it is their privilege to be able to detect the spark of eternal soul, still latent, under the dull mountain of folly, even in fools, while we can see no further than the mountains; and so it is truly said their vision, and thence their sympathies, are extended."

"True," said Oakfield, fervently; "I admit your distinction; and will you not add, Stanton, that to the Christian man there is always a wonderful escape open; that he, of all men, is ever privileged to have communion with the greatest man's soul that ever was, or is, or can be?"

"True," replied Stanton, "solitude was one of the griefs from which he redeemed us; we are not alone, because he is with us, even as he was not alone, because the Father was with him. Come," he said, after a short pause, during which they both sat silent, looking at the fire, as is the man-

ner of musing men, "let us apply part of what we have been saying, and come over to mess, — the first bugle sounded ages ago."

They joined arms and walked over to the mess hard by.

"I have made two new acquaintances since I saw you last, Oakfield; I might almost say friendships, were they of longer standing; one man you will meet to-night; Wykham, of the 12th cavalry; a very pleasant fellow; reminds me sometimes of Vernon. I must have a long talk with you about that dear boy, Oakfield."

"You shall; poor dear Arthur! I shall be curious to see this man, — of what standing is he?"

"About seven years, — looks very young though; but the other, — by the by, I forgot; he said he knew you well; that he came up the river with you."

"Not Mr. Middleton?" exclaimed Oakfield.

"The very man, sir."

"Where is he now, — not here?"

"No; but where you will very soon be able to see him, — at Ferozepore."

With these words they reached the mess-house. Wykham was dining with Stanton, who introduced him to his friend. Wykham was a cavalry officer, as Stanton had informed Oakfield, of some seven years' standing. He appeared young; indeed, having come out at seventeen, he was only twenty-four, and looked less; he was a very short, small-made man, with long black hair, not large, but very bright eyes, a fairly-shaped, moderately-sized, but in no ways striking nose; his mouth was by far the most expressive feature, small, sharply, firmly, gracefully cut, though rather disguised by a dark, well-defined mustache. The only thing that could ever have made Stanton compare him to Vernon was his fresh, transparent complexion, so beautiful a feature everywhere, but especially amongst the pasty,

muddy, liver-stained visages of Anglo-Indians. His expression was cheerful and sunshiny to a degree, contrasting, we do not say favorably, but pleasurably, with the tanned, quaint, old-bachelor look of Stanton, and the anxious, rather melancholy expression of Oakfield. He had a clear, ringing, almost boyish voice, and a laugh which alone would have made him popular at a mess-table. One more trait, not of person, but of mind, perhaps, had reminded Stanton of Vernon, — his almost childish affection for home. He was as unlike Oakfield and Stanton as possible; had none of the earnest spiritual interests of the one, nor the quaint semi-epicurean philosophy of the other; and yet perhaps more wit — would have been vulgarly called more clever — than either of them. Yet he was a man that it was almost impossible, if well known, not to love. He was a specimen of the natural or honorable man (if we may use the expression) in its best development. He had been brought up on worldly, but "strictly honorable principles"; his father was a soldier of the old school, who in many ways deserved "the grand old name of gentleman"; these "honorable principles" had been engrafted on a congenial stock, and bore good fruit after their kind; what marvel if they were mistaken for, or at any rate received as, a sufficient substitute for a better kind? what marvel that young Wykham, with his ardent, generous nature and "strictly honorable principles," — having come in contact with so many without either natural nobleness or conventional honor, — having seen the infinite superiority of gentlemen to blackguards, — should have come to the conclusion that after all "gentlemanliness," in his sense of the word, and "honor," were the most excellent way, — should have been content to take this as his religion and idea of life? Let us be assured that many men of twenty-three have a worse religion and a lower idea, — few a better and a higher. And yet there is great hope that a

noble nature shall some day have got all the good that is to be had out of gentlemanliness, and seek a deeper vein; when the merry heart which now laughs out of those happy eyes shall be overclouded, surely that man of honor will kindly and easily develop himself into a man of wisdom and of love.

Such was the Lieutenant Wykham to whom Oakfield was introduced, and to whom, before dinner was over, he already felt strongly attracted. Not that they were attracted, as that foolish saying goes, by the great dissimilarity of their characters; dissimilarity never attracts; "Like will to like": not by the dissimilarity, but by the real fundamental harmony which united them both, and which existing, the superficial difference might perhaps give an additional piquancy. They were indeed engaged in the study of the same harmony, though in different parts; Wykham playing lightly and happily over those upper notes which lay clearly, palpably, and harmoniously open before him: poor Oakfield struggling, not without perplexity, with those deeper chords that ring, not with a more correct, yet with a deeper and diviner tone. Wykham was undoubtedly the better and readier performer; but on how much simpler an instrument!

They soon plunged *in medias res* about home, public schools (Wykham had been at Eton), India, and so forth. Wykham abused this last with an energy that amused Oakfield, in language that would have been too vehement had it not been qualified by his good-humored voice and laughing eye. Stanton sat and listened with a serious judicial air. Wykham ran off a rhetorical string in which the words "fools," "drunkards," stood out somewhat harshly. Oakfield, warming to his work, chimed in with "uneducated," "frivolous," "worldly-minded."

"My dear boys," said Stanton, when they had both done,

"you won't make the world you live in a bit better by abusing it."

"O, don't listen to that cold-blooded epicurean old scoundrel; he 'd tell you that this country was one of the best in the world, and swears that Blackey is an amiable angel, who never told a lie in his life; and that officers never misbehave, and civilians never bully the natives; and he hopes to live here all his life, and never go back to that wretched, wicked, uncomfortable England."

"Unluckily, youngster," said Stanton, laughing, "Oakfield knows how much I like this country; I only say it 's no use complaining and yelling about it; if you don't like it, get out of it; and if you have n't the pluck to do that, hold your tongue and make the best of it."

"Did you ever hear such an old bear?" said Wykham, turning to Oakfield.

"Some truth in it, I fear though," said the other, looking half ashamed of his share in the duet.

"I don't admit," said Wykham, —

"No, no, old fellow," interrupted Stanton, "of course you don't, we never thought you would. When do you leave this?"

Wykham laughed, shook his head at Oakfield, as though he would say, "Observe his coolness in treating me like a child," but only answered, "Not till the 15th of April."

"You 've got your leave, though?"

"O, yes, — 15th of April to 15th of October; hills north of Deyrah, on private affairs."

"O, you are going to Mussoorie; why not Simla?"

"I 've been there twice, and want to see the other place. Do you think of going to the hills this hot weather?" turning to Oakfield.

"No, I never thought of it; why, you see, it 's only my second hot weather in the country."

"Ah, that 's the way," said Wykham; "men never think of the hills till they 've once been there, and then they never think of anything else; there's Stanton never been to the hills in his life, I believe, — just the kind of regular old pipe-clay Indian who would like to sit grilling down in the plains every year of his life."

"Wrong again, Wykham; I was in the hills long before you came out, you griff; come away, Oakfield, — that fellow always makes one abusive; come and have a cup of tea at my quarters."

So they went and spent one of those pleasant evenings over a good fire, which now and then, in the cold weather, remind the poor exile of the winter evenings he has left at home. Wykham kept most of the talking to himself; was never deep, but always amusing; sometimes witty, sometimes childish.

"He 's a very good fellow," said Stanton, when he had taken his departure.

"So he seems, indeed," assented Oakfield, with great heartiness.

The three weeks' sojourn at Meerut — what with the artillery hounds and cricket in the day-time, pleasant parties and comfortable after-dinner sittings in the evening — passed pleasantly, only too quickly. The cold weather was drawing to a close. It was the middle of March; the fire in the evening was on the wane, was occasionally suffered to go out unperceived; some careful married men began to decline coming down to cricket in the middle of the day, "because of the sun"; it was, however, the best part of the year for dák travelling. Oakfield and Stanton tiffed together the afternoon on which the former was to start; Wykham too, who had been a great deal with them during Oakfield's visit, was there. At about four o'clock they parted, not without hopes of meeting again erelong, now that all three were in the Northwest.

Oakfield got into his palki, and commenced his journey at a melancholy jig-jog pace, with that doleful grunt of the bearers which so painfully characterizes this Indian mode of locomotion. And yet a fine cool evening, in a palki, is not altogether unpleasant; so, at least, our traveller thought, as he jogged along, with the shutters open, comfortably observing, in his recumbent posture, how a beautiful sky can atone for the dulness of the dullest landscape; how all sense of weariness, at the waste of treeless, waterless sand, was lost in admiration of the setting sun; the calm cool night stealing over the cloudless sky; the stars imperceptibly becoming visible; for so it is that a beautiful night makes even a desert beautiful. A palki, too, is a good place for thinking; no life stirring, except the bearers, who, in their swarthy nakedness, stalk along by the side, gabbling in an unknown, unknowable dialect; the traveller, as he journeys along in the darkness, feels that influence of solitude which always tends to thoughtfulness.

Oakfield thought of the friend he had just left, — of Wykham, whose frank, kindly, youthful gayety had made a great impression upon him, — of his own Hajeepoor life, — of Vernon, and thence, by a natural transition, of his home friends. Occasionally he would throw a forward glance at his new regiment, and speculate what it would be like, — what he was to do, — what scope there could possibly be for a man in regimental life, believing assuredly that there must be some. He thought of those Moravian soldiers who, after Wesley's preaching, had given the last genuine impulse to Protestantism, had, for boldly rebuking vice, protesting against ordinary worldliness, suffered persecution. "This is the nineteenth century, it is true," he would say to himself, "and according to the old soporific adage, 'Things are changed, and society is so different, and who am I that I should rebuke others?' and so on. All true in its way, but

too comfortable, — too soothing a truth to make it necessary to insist much upon it; the opposite equally essential truth of never compromising goodness for expediency's sake, — meaning by expediency selfish personal ease; this is more to the purpose to remember in these days. We are safe enough from becoming enthusiasts, God knows. A perplexed question! and yet, I believe, a single-eyed love of good — a determined resolution neither to do nor in any way to countenance evil — will carry one through. There is a field of duty everywhere; I know that; — and if God is ever to be known in India by missionary preaching, the missionaries must be, not a score or so of isolated clergymen, but the soldiers and civilians!"

So thinking, he fell asleep, and journeyed on comfortably enough, waking only at the stages, when the relieved bearers opened the shutter, thrust in their torch and black heads, and most unceremoniously demanded *buxees*.*

We need not follow him through the monotonous stages of his dák journey. Suffice it to say he travelled day and night, and reached Ferozepore on the 1st of April, being the fifth morning after he had left Meerut; and found that his regiment was not expected for some days. On the 6th they were to march in. It was not without anxiety that Oakfield rode out to see them.

He kept aloof and observed; the result of his observations was satisfactory, the first appearances were highly favorable; the regular march, the well-sloped arms, the locked-up ranks, the equidistant sections, and the general appearance of both officers and men, no less than the precision with which they went through the simple business of dismissal when they reached the ground, spoke well for the

* "*Buxees*," that is, gratuity; one of the plagues of the East. No man is content to receive the wage of his work, but expects an additional *buxees*, or gratuity.

discipline of the regiment. They were preceded, too, by a good band, — also symptomatic. In fact, the 90th Light Infantry were a crack corps. Nor let it be denied that this is a great praise. It implies good discipline; good discipline for the most part implies a capacity for good fighting; and fighting is what a regiment is meant for. Then "crackness" implies also a certain standard of honor, of which the 81st (for instance) were quite innocent, and of which again it may be said that it is infinitely better than nothing. And yet, unfortunately, this honor standard, to say nothing of its intrinsic value, generally had an Indian tinge in it. These 90th were "all honorable men," — but they were also all in debt. Crackness is not to be had for nothing. And perhaps the motive which led to this unfortunate indebted state of things was (however much the parties concerned called it *esprit de corps*, sacrificing themselves individually to the good of the regiment, and so on) but a vulgar one; — a wish, namely, to imitate another service; to try to do with fifteen officers what Queen's regiments do, not without debt, with thirty. The same affectation showed itself in other ways: regardless of climate, red jackets in all seasons were compulsory at mess, and decanters only might appear upon the mess-table; they even went so far as to ignore the native languages, in imitation of the universal ignorance prevalent in the royal army; considered it *infra dig* to understand that "damned black lingo"; which ignorance, assumed in the first instance with the seniors, degenerated in a few years into a very genuine one in the case of the juniors, so that the unfortunate interpreter, when he found himself pestered by fifty notes in a morning from subalterns, asking the Hindustani for "Boil this egg hard," "The curry 's too hot," &c., &c., had reason to curse the day when this absurd fashion was first adopted.

Of course the corps was detested by other native infantry

regiments (whom they in return looked down upon), and what was worse, heartily laughed at by the service which they aped; but to this, as is the wont of servility, they were blind. Such was the Indian flaw in their honor standard,—which, as has been said, is a poor one at best. A word terribly dragged through the mud that same unfortunate "honor." What honor really is, we need not define; what it is supposed to be by crack regiments and the like is more our concern.

It behooved the 90th regiment, according to their own idea of honor, to fight well, and to be smart in manœuvring, in the dressing and setting up of the regiment. So far so good. A clear gain this, showing how much better an honor standard is than none. It was in their creed, also, that the officers should dress well on ordinary occasions. This again was not so well, seeing that it involved larger tailor's bills than ensigns on a hundred and ninety-five rupees a month could at all manage to pay. The same objection may apply to many other articles of faith, with regard to the number and style of horses, furniture, &c. which become a member of a crack regiment. A good outside, in short, was what honor prescribed in the first place.

Next came the moral duties, which began with "Thou shalt not fear," an excellent commandment, comprising, indeed, almost all others, if interpreted, "Thou shalt not fear man nor devil," but considerably less excellent if understood, "Thou shalt not fear God, nor man, nor devil." In this last sense, indeed, a merely brutal and hideous commandment. Honor finds, after its fashion, a mediocre interpretation between these two, and says, "Thou shalt fear God, so far as to go to church on a Sunday now and then, and to be horrified, and express thy horror loudly, should a clergyman ever be guilty of one, even the least, of those excesses which thou thyself dost not scruple to

commit daily. Thou mayst fear the devil or not, as seemeth thee good, or even compromise the matter by speaking of him in a manner partly fearful, partly reverent (no knowing, as some one said, where thou mayst want a friend one of these days), partly facetious; but thou shalt not fear man; that is, thou shalt not fear his sword, nor his pistol, nor his fist; but *him*, — his blame, his scorn, his reproach, his coldness, thou shalt be afraid of with an exceeding fear." This is the first and great commandment; the second is, "Thou shalt pay attention to women, not, as some do vainly talk, that thou shouldest regard women with great awe and reverence as the weaker vessel, and the purer and the holier; but thou shalt hand chairs to them with zeal, and study to grimace and wag thy foolish tongue, that they, being taught of thy folly, shall at length think well of thee, and so gratify thy vanity; in short, thou shalt be a lady's man." Third commandment, "Thou shalt create a sensation by spending much money; whether or not thou hast it to spend is but a tame, poor-spirited question"; and so on through a whole decalogue and more, the long and short of which may be thus summed up: —

"Thou man, with an immortal soul, member also of this crack regiment, shalt not seek wisdom in the heaven above nor in the earth below, shalt move daily amid the wonders of the universe in thy course from finity to infinity unwondering: — shalt wonder at nothing; shalt rather be wrapped in contemplation of thine own beauty, in earnestly studying to appear beautiful by such adornments as thy tailor, thy horse-dealer, thy bootmaker, can furnish thee withal; in laboring by infinite noise to raise as much dust as may be around thee; that, instead of thy wondering at God's works, and thyself, also his work, thy neighbors and acquaintances may be induced to wonder, poor fool! at thee."

Such was the section of society, such was the code, with which Oakfield's destiny now brought him into contact.

CHAPTER XII.

"By no disturbance of my soul
Or strong compunction in me wrought
I supplicate for thy control,
But in the quietness of thought.
Me this unchartered freedom tires,
I feel the weight of chance desires;
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same."

WORDSWORTH.

OAKFIELD was not long in finding out Mr. Middleton. He found him living not alone, but with his sister, a young girl of about nineteen, who had just come out from England.

And now doubtless the reader supposes that we have at last come to the heroine, and that Oakfield is forthwith to fall in love. Alas! we fear not. Much as he admired Miss Middleton, — much as he soon got to like her, — intimate as he became by his constant visits to the house, — it is quite certain that after a year's residence at Ferozepore, the greater part of which had been passed in the Middletons' society, he was not at all in love. It was hard to say why not; far too hard for the Ferozepore gossips, which term includes the whole community, who looked on the engagement as a settled thing. All the parties concerned, indeed, when questioned by the few intimate acquaintances who considered themselves privileged to ask, denied it; but of course this went for nothing. Meanwhile neither Mr. Middleton nor his sister were weak enough to shrink from what was

becoming every day a more and more agreeable friendship, in deference to cantonment small talk, of the existence of which they were aware, but, living very much out of society, were very indifferent to. Miss Middleton was, as has been said, a girl of nineteen, fresh from England; no one could have refused to call her pretty: her well-shaped head, her expressive brown eyes, her small, finely-cut, slightly aquiline nose, her sharp, well-shaped mouth, with her beautiful, though rather pale complexion, established her claim beyond dispute to beauty of feature. And he must have been dull who had quarrelled with the expression of intelligence and refinement that shone so manifestly in her whole countenance. And yet some complained that she looked too clever. Young ladies five and six years her senior felt half afraid of her; sometimes, indeed, her features did wear, not a stern, but a severe expression, that looked strangely in nineteen. She was universally declared to be *blue;* crack officers of the 90th who danced with her at station balls, and found, they knew not why, their crack ball-room commonplace break down under them in the presence of simplicity, ignorant of the cause, painfully conscious of the effect, avenged themselves by reiterating this "blue" charge loudly. And yet *blueness* seldom leaves its victims such free grace in action and conversation. She was a problem, as indeed a sensible, unaffected, well-educated, graceful woman always will be to stupid, affected, ignorant, coarse people. To Oakfield naturally not a problem, and yet the Ferozepore mess were right, when, after things had gone on in the same way for about a year, they began to think that, "after all, Oakfield was not spooney upon Fanny Middleton." Some of the young subalterns, indeed, thought their own prospects "in that quarter" were beginning to brighten, that small talk would assert its supremacy after all. What then (that the reader may not be as much puzzled as the

90th mess), what was actually the footing on which Oakfield stood with his friends? Intimate friendship simply; in which there is really nothing wonderful, if simply stated and simply believed; wonderful only to the mental eye overlaid with gossip, through which these things can be only gossipingly discerned. Oakfield was, indeed, struck with Miss Middleton from the first, and conceived it possible that he might fall in love; did not think it necessary to shrink with horror from the possibility, rather hoped, indeed, that it might be so; he continued his visits, talked with her and her brother, and found the society of both delightful; but really very much in the same way; he did not get to regard her with any feeling essentially different from what he did her brother. Perhaps there *was* something cold in her quick intelligence; perhaps, without at all admitting that *blue* charge, the intellectual element did a little predominate over the sentiment in her; there was perhaps a want of that helplessness, that all-womanly dependence, which might have moved Oakfield's deepest affections. However this might have been, fall in love he certainly did not, and she knew it, and so did her brother, and a tacit common understanding existed between them that it was so.

Meanwhile this acquaintance kept Oakfield rather aloof from the regiment. Not only that he passed so much of his time with the Middletons, — riding, dining, very often spending the day with them, but also because there was one unfortunate peculiarity in the conversation of this crack regiment that made him shun the mess-table. There was no open brutality, — and for this let "crackness" have its due; — he did not weary of *shop*, though it doubtless did sometimes become wearisome; he could bear tenderly with the infinite affectation of Lieutenant Jackson, and the radiant self-satisfaction of Ensign Wemyss; the bastard sporting slang of Captain Whittles was a grievance he could endure;

nor would he have murmured at the flash man-about-town-talk of the dark-complexioned Wiggins, who had been seventeen years in India, but none the less delighted to talk familiarly of the club and the season, as though he were an habitué of the London pavé. But the sin which he could not forgive was the familiar disrespectful way in which he constantly heard ladies' names bandied about, according to the 90th honor standard of interpretation of the second commandment of gentlemanliness recorded above. There was a poor girl in the regiment, — that is to say daughter of its commandant, — whose one only known sin before God or man was her ugliness. Most ugly she undoubtedly was; as undoubtedly shy, modest, retiring, amiable; a good daughter, and bearing her affliction with ever patient cheerfulness. Even the consciousness that his mess was a gentlemanly one, and its members the most "gentlemanly set of men in the service," could not reconcile Oakfield to the coarse, unfeeling way in which the changes were being perpetually rung upon the bare subject of this poor girl's ugliness. There might have been a flirting young lady in the station rejoicing in the name of Sarah Waters, and Oakfield neither the wiser nor the worse; but to one who valued woman's society as the purest influence of life, who regarded a woman's very name as sacred, it *was* painful to see and hear, every night, Ensign Brooks, as he came into the mess-room, and, patting Lieutenant Straddles on the back, exclaimed, "Well, old fellow, seen Sally to-night?" And then to hear of the puppyish things which Straddles averred proudly he had said to Sally, and the infinitely unfeminine answers which he declared Sally had made to him! But a horrible thought suggested itself to Oakfield, that this style of free conversation, by no means confined to Miss Sarah Waters, might extend itself in his absence (not in his presence, for character wins a certain involuntary half-liking

respect from crackness itself) to his own friends. He thought, in short, of the name of Miss Middleton being thus degraded, and although, as has been repeated, he was not in love, the thought filled him with horror; so, with the exception of his intercourse with the Middletons, he began to fall back very much into his solitary Hajeepore course of life, — a course which again had the natural effect of making him disliked.

He was sorry for this, but did not think it at all a serious calamity. Living very much alone, he found himself naturally led into Stanton's reading habits, and determined to commence reading on a systematic plan. His actual military duties, slight as they were, he discharged with a conscientious and *con amore* diligence and energy that won him the reputation of being a smart officer; indeed, there was something almost ludicrous in the tenacity with which he clung to the ray of work which his profession afforded. As to the native languages, he had great disputes with Mr. Middleton as to the necessity and duty of giving up much time to them; he so far obliged his friend, and perhaps satisfied his own conscience, as to work for and pass the Hindustani examination, but could not make up his mind to go on for the great go.* He was dining at the Middletons' the day he had passed in Hindustani, the 15th of November, — just that season of the year when fires again begin to be lighted, and all are cheered, not only by the present enjoyment of the delightful November weather, but also by the thought of having a whole cold season before them. After dinner, Mr. Middleton, his sister, and Oakfield, drew round the fire. "And what do you intend to do, now that you have passed the P. H.,† Oakfield?" the former began.

* Meaning the higher examination, not in Hindustani alone, but also Persian and Hindee.

† *P. H.* are the letters affixed in the army list to the names of those offi-

Oakfield had been expecting some such question, and drew himself up as though preparing to do battle. "Burn the Bytal Pachisi,† to begin with," he answered, laughing.

"Well, I sha'n't quarrel with you for that, if you buy the Prem Sagur in its stead. Seriously, I hope you will go on for the P."

"Upon my word, Miss Middleton! I appeal to you, whether this is fair of your brother. He talked me before into submission to a theory not my own, in deference to which I devoted three months to the most lamentable drudgery, and now, the very day that the result of my weakness is made manifest, he begins a new attack."

"Well, but you know, Mr. Oakfield, I always agreed with him in the former discussions, and what was true then is true now?"

"I ask you, Oakfield," said Mr. Middleton, "don't you feel very glad to have passed the P. H.?"

"Of course I do; because one is always glad to have an examination over, and besides, to have acquired some knowledge of a language, even Hindustani, can never be a matter of regret."

"And does not the same apply to Persian? — Should you regret having learned that?"

"Of course not; though I fancy it is rather a magnificent way of speaking, to talk of a man who passes the interpreter's examination as having learned Persian; but at any rate I would much rather have learned German at the end of the next six months."

"In England, I grant you, German would be a better language to learn than Persian, but not in India."

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cers who have passed the examination in Hindustani; thus a man speaks of having passed his P. H. — *P.*, again, denotes having passed all the examinations required, — Hindustanee, Persian, and Hindee.

* *Bytal Pachisi* and *Prem Sagur*, the two text-books in Hindee, the former for the P. H., the latter for the P. examination.

"Why not?"

"Simply because the studies of true interest in every country are to be drawn from the people amongst whom you live; and to profit by these, you must know the language of the people *well;* — this in the first place. In the second, because the P. examination is the highest test prescribed by government for staff employ."

"My dear Mr. Middleton, I think really that first reason is more like one which a person in England would assign, than a man of thirteen years' Indian experience. That *your* principal interests may lie in that direction is very likely, but what does, what can, a subaltern in a native infantry regiment see or know of the people? Beyond our official connection with the sepoys, and our domestic relation with our servants, we see really nothing of the people, have nothing to do with them, no influence, nor any opportunity of gaining influence, with them."

"I dare say," said Miss Middleton, "that that is quite true; intercourse with the natives is just one of those vague sweeping expressions which people in England are so fond of with regard to India."

"Just so," said Oakfield, "and which, however well meant, are really nothing more than what all vague sweeping expressions, founded upon ignorance, are, — cant."

"My dear sir, above all things, clear your mind of cant," Miss Middleton quoted, laughingly.

"Yes," responded Oakfield, seriously, "that above all things: true, O Dr. Johnson!"

"Well," said Mr. Middleton, "between you, my unhappy 'in the first place,' has been pretty well pulled to pieces; you calling it cant, and you, Miss Fanny, helping out his impertinence with a quotation. But you gain no real advantage after all; you only push me a step further back. My second proposition, that the main interests of life must be

derived from the people and circumstances that surround you, is still true; at least you have not denied it, but only its applicability to the case of a native infantry subaltern. Then I can only answer, that it becomes your true interest to try and change that case, and get into a situation where it is applicable."

"Henry gets out of his scrape with great cleverness, I think," observed Miss Middleton.

"You mean, in plain English," said Oakfield, "that I should try to get an appointment?"

"Well — yes, — at least not an appointment merely, but such an appointment as will bring you intellectually and morally in contact with the people amongst whom it is your lot physically to live."

"In plain English, again, try to get into civil employ."

"At last we come to it, — yes."

"I have not the least inclination for it."

"Perhaps not; but what then?"

"Why should I solicit what I do not wish for, merely because it is what other people choose to think a good thing."

"Have you no wish to rise to distinction?"

"I hardly know what you will think of me for the confession, but honestly, — no."

"O Mr. Oakfield! what a want of ambition!" Miss Middleton exclaimed, almost impatiently, and her sparkling eye proclaimed at once where lay one of the points of disunion between her and Oakfield.

"I wish I could feel sure it was want of ambition," he said with rather a sad smile, "for that last infirmity of noble minds has always seemed to me but a contemptible sort of infirmity after all; — but I fear indolence may have as much or more to do with it as wise contentment."

"And suspecting that to be the case," said Mr. Middleton, "do you consider yourself justified in shrinking from work?"

"Is there no other work besides this one line which you point out?"

"I certainly doubt whether there is. Consider yourself, — can you name any other?"

"Do you remember, Mr. Middleton, our conversation coming up the river, about a year ago, when you propounded two problems for my edification?"

"Perfectly, — what then?"

"Why," answered Oakfield, "the first might be called a statement of the object, — of that native line of work which you are recommending; — but the second, though you call it less important, has often suggested itself to me as more so; and the second would seem to point to a line of duty very different from civil employ, — a line for which I think I feel myself more fitted, I am sure more inclined."

"What was the second problem?"

"The reason of the great and generally acknowledged degradation of European society in this country."

"I do not think I ever can have called that question even comparatively unimportant; I may have said it was easier of solution."

"Well, at any rate you now own it to be important; — does not this question point to what I may call a European phase of labor?"

"My dear Oakfield, I might retort your own complaint upon you, — all this is vague. It is very well to talk of reforming society in this country, but beyond that reform which every good and able man works by the force of his own character, how are you to work? where are you to begin?"

"By putting one's self first in opposition to some cherished lie, by exposing the falseness which lies wrapped in some commonplace respectable formula?"

"Well, but," interrupted Mr. Middleton, "how are you

to do this? — This is only saying still in general terms, what is to be done? — I still ask, how do you propose to do it?"

"That is a question not answered in a moment: opportunities, I should think, would not fail to present themselves, — and then —"

"And then you may seize them; but what till then? How fill your time till they do occur? It may well happen that an honest man, if on the look-out, may find opportunities of effectively asserting some truth in opposition to some fashion of society, but this will not make a life's work."

"Well, then," said Oakfield, evidently rather pressed, "I will work for myself. Why should not I as well as another devote myself to study? My profession leaves me ample leisure; why should I not, instead of seeking to change this leisurely for an engrossed, fully-occupied life, rather embrace the former? Why not live in contemplation till God chooses to call me to action? Why seek action? Is not contemplation, too, work? Is it not work to seek for wisdom, to learn to read nature, to learn to live? I see no necessity for my striving to become a collector, or a magistrate, but every necessity for my working. I have a right more or less to choose my work beyond that which my actual calling in life demands from me. I may choose, with fear and self-distrust indeed, but still without shame or doubt that it is an allowable choice, that work which is open to all God's creatures, which is silent, whose end is hidden, whose rewards are secret, in preference to that which the world calls work, as though there were no other, the work which it is indeed most essential should be done by some, but which it is not essential for all to do; whose praise is loud, because its results are evident and its rewards manifest; — the work of carrying on the world's business."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Middleton, half musingly, "you are

so far right that we are too apt, all of us, to consider that essential in which we are engaged ourselves."

"And to forget," added Oakfield, "that which is essential to all of us. You won't think for a moment," he continued, "that I am talking in presumptuous disparagement of that noble toil which you and many others so bravely combine with your own active, personal, spiritual life; I merely contend for the freedom of choice; and maintain that a life of thought, and study, and contemplation may be as *bonâ fide* a life of profitable work as cutcherry-going and magistracy; provided of course that it be not pursued at the expense of that service which we owe to our worldly calling if we have any."

"I believe there is much truth in what you say, Oakfield, — and yet, in connection with what we first began talking about, I cannot but think that you would feel more free to select your own line in life, when you had done all that was required to qualify yourself for those other duties which most men consider the most important."

"A terrible waste of time," urged Oakfield.

"I doubt whether any time that is spent upon an irksome, unwelcome labor for conscience' sake is *wasted*," replied Mr. Middleton; and he lifted his eyes from the fire where they had been fixed, and looked at Oakfield, who seemed to have no answer to make.

"Fairly beaten!" exclaimed Miss Middleton, as she rose and led the way into the drawing-room. "What a pity it is," she said to her brother when Oakfield had gone, "that he should not have more ambition; he might rise to great things in this country."

"Depend upon it, Fan, that there are few men in Ferozepore more ambitious than Oakfield. — Yes," he continued, observing her incredulous look, "I believe that man to be most singularly and genuinely ambitious to serve God; —

and that, Fan, is a rare ambition, not the last infirmity, but the noblest craving, of noble minds."

Meanwhile, Oakfield meditated upon the foregoing conversation, and the result of his meditations may be seen in the following note, which he addressed to Mr. Middleton the next morning: —

"My dear Middleton: —

"I have been thinking over what we were saying last night. As we pique ourselves on our 'practical tendencies' in conversation, you will be glad to hear that I am going to set to work this morning at the Gulistan.* The force of meekness can no further go.

"Yours affectionately,

"E. O."

So he recommenced his dreary studies, to which he devoted a steady six hours a day through the whole cold weather, managing, however, to get some cricket notwithstanding. He had been in the University eleven at Oxford, and therefore was of course a very great gun in that line at Ferozepore. There was one other occupation too which he never allowed any pressure of Persian, or Hindee, or cricket, or anything else, to supersede; and that was his correspondence. His home letters he still felt, as he had said to poor Arthur Vernon when he first came out, to be the greatest pleasure of his life; with his mother and Margaret, the intimacy, the deep communion, which had begun in the later years of his home life, was still continually becoming closer; to Herbert, too, he was bound by those close ties which connect the only two brothers of a family; and now the overland letters were beginning to acquire new interest from small scraps written in large round hand, in which Rose or Mary would say, "My dear Eddie, I hope you are quite well, — I wish you would come home, — I am quite well, —

* *Gulistan*, the Persian text-book for the "P." examination.

Tabby is quite well, — she had kittens last week. I am your affectionate Sister, &c. &c." He had two Indian correspondents, Stanton and Wykham, with both of whom he was in constant communication, and it would have been hard to say whose letters of the two were valued most; for though he had known Stanton so much longer, there was about the other a beaming cheerfulness, — an honest, unselfish, sunny heartiness, which made a letter from him as welcome as a shower of rain in the hot weather. Stanton's quaint, quiet, half-cynical, half-epicurean style never varied.

So Oakfield's days passed very quietly, and by no means unpleasantly. "I feel, you know," he said one day to Mr. Middleton, as they walked up and down the cricket-field, where a match was going on wherein Oakfield was engaged as a player, and Mr. Middleton as a spectator, "I feel that this Persian business, which does to pass the time, only postpones, and does not at all answer the question of what I am to do in life; it puts it further off, but it must come and be answered sooner or later; reading Gulistan is still preparation as much as Winchester was; — the entrance into real life remains future."

"What! you begin to acknowledge, then, that real life implies actual engagement in the world's work?"

"Not so," said Oakfield hastily; "by no means necessarily; I consider Stanton as engaged in real life, and yet he has nothing but his books, his papers, his meditations, and last, but not least, what constitutes indeed the great point, his own life, to frame according to the laws which he draws from those books and thoughts. — Hallo! there 's Perkins run out, — I never saw a man run so badly, — that 's the reason I would n't go in with him, — I must go in now though, so prepare to be astonished."

And he really might have astonished a spectator who knew more about the game than Mr. Middleton; the aston-

ishing way in which he drove Hargrave forward for four's; the leg hits which he made, sending the ball three times into the tent; the cautious science with which, when Hargrave retired in disgust, and Hopkins's more dangerous bowling succeeded, he contented himself with scoring singles, might have won admiration from the very cricket correspondent of "Bell's Life."

The cold weather passed on, and again the days began to grow hotter and hotter, and first fires disappeared, and then cloth trousers followed, and people went home earlier and earlier in the morning, and came out later and later in the evening, and doors and windows were closed, and then came punkahs by day, and next punkahs by night, and then tatties, and then therm-antidotes,* till at last May came round again, and found the unhappy Anglo-Indian world once more surrounded with all the necessary, but uncomfortable, sweltering panoply of the hot weather. May was enlivened, however, to Oakfield, by a visit from Stanton, who came over on a month's leave between musters, a great proof of friendship, to endure a ten nights' journey for a twenty days' sojourn. Wykham would have come, perhaps, had he been at Meerut, but he had managed "to do the head-quarters people again," and had, by unflagging energy, by continual persecution of the unhappy brigadier, and still more unhappy commanding officer, succeeded in getting leave to spend a second hot-weather running in the hills, and was gone to Simla. Stanton's visit, short as it was, was a real blessing, not to Oakfield only, but to the station generally, for as he of course became a companion in the frequent visits to the Middletons, the poor gossip, which had languished in the case of Oakfield, was enabled to revive in a new direction.

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* *Tatties* and *therm-antidotes*, — devices, well known to Anglo-Indians, for moderating the heat of a house in the hot season.

It was really creditable to the undaunted perseverance of gossip that it should have ventured to fix itself on Stanton of all people in the world, for if ever there was a Sphinx's riddle, it was to ascertain from his unmoved face and manner what he really thought about any person or thing whatsoever. The two were dining together at the Middletons' the night before that fixed for Stanton's departure. Very different was the look of things from when last we introduced the reader to that dining-room. The whitewashed fire-place, the open doors, the hot, dusty air blown about by the drowsy punkah, the white raiment and whitening faces, contrasted painfully with the scene presented on that cheerful November evening. The first important feature, however, remained unchanged, or changed only for the better by the addition of Stanton; the pleased, cheerful, friendly look and tone of the small group, whose regard for each other the burning dust-storms were happily unable to affect.

"Don't you think, Stanton," asked Mr. Middleton, "that I did a very good thing in persuading Oakfield to read for the P.?"

"O yes, undoubtedly; I admire you for it, and him still more; it's more than I could ever have done myself, I acknowledge; but then I always was lazy, or, at any rate, too fond of working in my own way. However, that proves nothing; it's clearly a good thing to get done. What do you intend to do after July, Oakfield?"

"If I pass —"

"Pass, O, of course, you'll pass; fancy a B. A. being plucked!"

"Ignominious, certainly," said Oakfield, laughing, "but I fear not impossible."

"You should go into the committee-room in cap and gown, and bachelor's hood, to impress them."

"A rabbit-skin over a red jacket would have an impres-

sive appearance certainly, judging from my recollection of those dear old men whom they will go on giving degrees to at Oxford; I never saw any sight so resembling one's idea of a cow in a china-shop as those poor old fellows with a Doctor of Laws' gown hanging uncomfortably over the epaulets of a field-officer's uniform."

"Well, I don't agree with you at all, Mr. Oakfield," Miss Middleton said; "I remember when I was at Oxford commemoration two years ago, some old officer received a degree, and I thought the combination of war and peace was striking."

"Ah! but it is more than war and peace, Miss Middleton; it is war and letters; war and the ingenuous arts; and the Phœnix who combines these two attributes is often found, I believe, in Continental armies, but I fear seldom in ours; so it is not a real union, but a sham one."

"I will not admit it to be a sham," she replied with animation; "it is not implied that the poor old general who is selected for honors is a literary man, but only that literature delights to acknowledge the services she has received from war."

"True," said Stanton; "don't answer, Oakfield, for you have made a failure; you may make anything absurd by putting it in a false light; — you have answered him unanswerably, Miss Middleton, and been a better champion for Alma Mater than her unworthy son."

So the evening passed off pleasantly. Conversation ran on easily and gracefully; and though they did not touch upon subjects of any deep interest, yet the consciousness that these interests existed was sufficient to give a warm and kindly tone to the current of lighter discourse that flowed easily over them. A deeper chord could not fail to be struck, however, as Stanton and Oakfield sat together in the verandah after their return home. There had been a dust-

storm all day, which had made the night air somewhat more bearable; and though the sky was still filled with the dingy particles, through which the stars were scarcely visible, yet there was the never-failing beauty of night, the beauty of silence and darkness. They were to part the next day, and though they were neither of them men given to much expression of feelings, who both hated anything like maundering, yet there is, especially in India, something very solemn in parting with a friend. These two men watched with common interest the stream of life as it bore them both along. Again for each of them it was to flow on alone; what pains, what struggles, what conquests, what defeats, must be experienced by each in his solitary course!

"Do you ever feel your conscience reproaching you, Stanton," Oakfield asked, "when you observe Middleton's busy, useful life?"

"That is just a question I have asked myself; and, on the whole, no. So far as he does his work more energetically than I do mine, I feel ashamed, but not because my work is of a different kind from his."

"What should you call your work, if you were asked in terms?"

"Study and contemplation, — improving and using my intellect as the servant of my soul, and learning to go through the world with my eyes not shut, but open."

"It must be hard to keep yourself up to this work?"

"Very; — so hard that, for this reason only, I would advise a man to try and get for himself some work which he shall be under compulsion to do; the compulsion itself does half his work for him."

"But, Stanton, besides this difficulty, do you never feel desirous that others should share in your belief? In your study to see, is it no pain to you that others should remain blind? — while trying yourself to look into the realities of

things, to see all the world around you mocking over the appearances and shadows of them? Do you never feel inclined to protest for your neighbors' sake and for the truth's sake against the idols which the world worships; the falsehoods which it acknowledges and promulgates, the — Look there!" he added abruptly, interrupting himself and pointing to the mess-house, about an hundred yards distant, whence the glare of the billiard lights, the sound of voices and loud laughter, offered a harsh contrast to the sacred stillness of night; "are not those sights and sounds a concrete made up of innumerable falsehoods, daily and hourly repeated?"

"Yes, it is so; but, Oakfield, they have Moses and the prophets and must hear them; a voice from the dead would not persuade them, how much less the feeble call of a companion struggling and sorely bested himself? Now and then comes a poet, a prophet, a priest, who does protest, as you call it, against the state of complacent unreality in which the world sleeps on, and some hear, but the many will refuse to hear, and no earthly power can alter it. It is a true word, however harsh it may sound; we must look out for ourselves, we must even live by our light, and be content to let the world live by theirs."

"And yet it seems there is something required of us more than letting them live by their light; we must appear to live by it also ourselves."

"Well then, we come to our old ground, and you know my opinion; that to a certain extent we must even do as you say, unless we consecrate our life and take it with us out of the world, and live altogether apart; but ordinary men in ordinary circumstances must, so far as I see, accommodate themselves to the light of their neighbors, taking care the while that their own is not dimmed. I see no help for it; extraordinary circumstances have ere now occurred

and called forth witnesses; as an extraordinary man tramples down ordinary circumstances and speaks as a poet or a prophet; so extraordinary circumstances may draw forth ordinary men into the position of witnesses, that is of martyrs: those of us who can, may become the first, of our own motion; only we must count the cost and weigh ourselves, and ascertain if we are, indeed, strong enough for the task. I need not say that you and I have no such estimation of ourselves; but all of us must ever hold ourselves ready at God's bidding to become the last. I fear I do not make myself clear."

"I understand you," said Oakfield, "have you ever felt so bidden?"

"In a very small way we are all of us often called upon to become martyrs. Every time we refuse to laugh at vice, or assent to an unpopular opinion, so often we are, in a very low degree, witnesses, martyrs to the truth; but I never have been put in a position where the testimony has been attended by grave penalties, an exemption I am thankful for, and yet I know more painful martyrdom may be my lot, or yours, or any honest man's, at any time; keep we ready for that time, for depend upon it, Oakfield, it is more trying than you and I may be disposed to think; so good night."

The next day Stanton departed, little knowing how soon Oakfield's experience was to verify this their last conversation.

CHAPTER XIII.

"On, let no longer
Low trickling malice blacken your good meaning
With abhorred venomous glosses. Stand you up
Shielded, and helmed, and weaponed with the truth,
And drive before you into uttermost shame
These slanderous liars! Few firm friends have we."

"But how can it be known that you 're in earnest,
If the act follow not upon the word?"

COLERIDGE.

WE have observed that Oakfield was not very popular in his regiment. He was conscious of the fact, and did all that he thought he had a right to do to remove the disagreeable impression by courtesy, by taking such opportunities as he could find (scanty it must be owned) to oblige his brother officers, and by mixing with the regiment more than he had hitherto done. He still, however, found himself offended by that infirmity which has been alluded to; he once ventured to remonstrate in private with Straddles (about the worst offender in this respect), but Straddles, who had often felt aggrieved at the rebuke which Oakfield's silence implied to some of his free and easy criticisms on the ladies of the station, did not take the remonstrance at all kindly, said, rather sulkily, "that he had been in the service a good deal the longest of the two, and thought he knew how to behave to a lady as well as another; that at any rate it was no business of Oakfield's, and it was very absurd of him to

affect a prudishness in that which nobody else saw any harm in."

Oakfield increased the *suaviter in modo*, but said "that he thought others did see harm in it; that it was a regimental practice, he allowed, but one which had been remarked upon, he knew, by other men out of the regiment, with disapprobation."

This was meant well, but it was an unfortunate remark. Straddles immediately adopted the high-flown *esprit de corps* line, thought it "very odd for an officer to allow strangers to speak ill of his regiment, and not only so, but to adopt their slanders; that for his part, he was content with the approbation of his brother officers, without travelling out of the regiment; that he did n't think a man so much the better for being a civilian," &c., &c.; and so Oakfield found that, in his desire to conciliate, he had done more harm than good, and Straddles went off in high dudgeon to tell his brother officers of Oakfield's having taken it upon him to set up as censor of manners to the 90th, and as the *suaviter in modo* completely disappeared in the second-hand recital, poor Oakfield was generally anathematized as a meddlesome, ignorant, presumptuous puppy. A griff to come and dictate to a crack corps on manners! Their morals might be capable perhaps of reformation, but if they had a strong point it was their manners. So far so good; and Oakfield might have relapsed into his original secluded way of life, just regretting that his attempt to mend matters had failed so signally, while the regiment might have subsided into their former state of disliking indifference, had it not been for the arrival of a new and important actor on the scene, whose coming was the signal for the revival of irritation. Oakfield had often heard Lieutenant Stafford spoken of and referred to as a great authority in the regiment, and was rather curious when he heard, one morning in the middle of June, that

this great personage had reported his arrival on return from furlough. He was introduced to him that night at mess; they both met with an awkward consciousness; Oakfield had not been disposed to admire what he had heard of Stafford, who, on his part, had been hearing in the course of the day all the complaints in the regiment about Oakfield's presumptuous isolation from his brother officers, or still more presumptuous interference with them; neither was there anything prepossessing in the sullen, quarrelsome expression of Stafford's dark features. He was, indeed, one of those men who are a disgrace to the society that tolerates them. It is not to be supposed but that a crack corps, like the 90th, should have had very strict notions on what are called, *par excellence*, the laws of honor; and although, of late years, the change in public opinion had compelled them to modify somewhat of their practice in this respect, the theory was more rigid than ever. Stafford was the great authority and example on this important subject. He had been out three or four times, had been once wounded, and, it was rumored, had once killed his man, though to this point there was attached a mystery which the juniors of the regiment had never penetrated.

The bad reputation which these "affairs" won for him had their natural effect upon his irascible, sullen temper, and he became the pest and bully of his regiment. That his brother officers in great measure endured his insolence will not be wondered at by those who know how long and unaccountably the reign of a bully lasts amongst boys and men alike, how magical the spell of his power appears, till some one suddenly comes forward, braves, and breaks it.

Returning from England, Stafford felt himself called upon to brush up his reputation. His first business was to look out for a safe man, and Oakfield seemed to offer himself, in many ways, for his selection. It was obvious that, much

as he was disliked, Oakfield had nevertheless a kind of weight and influence in the corps, not entirely unlike his own, — "alike, but O how different!" There was a seriousness in Oakfield's expression, and a firmness about the mouth, that might not promise well, but the eye of the bully rested more upon the soft, courteous, conciliating manner, perhaps, too, the almost girlish delicacy of complexion, as characteristics not often found in the fire-eater. In a few days, it was generally understood in the corps that Stafford had expressed his intention of taking this Mr. Oakfield in hand, "and bringing him to his bearings," and Straddles, Brooks, and Co. were, like school-boys, on the look-out for mischief. Oakfield knew something of Stafford's character, observed his rather discourteous manner to himself, and resolved to be particularly careful neither to give nor to take offence. There are certain limits which even a bully cannot go beyond, and within these, Stafford found it impossible to effect his object; for things which might undoubtedly have been interpreted as insults, fell back powerless from the appalling suavity of Oakfield's apparently imperturbable temper. So he determined to change his ground, and finally adopted Straddles's mischievous advice, "to try him on with the Middleton touch." Straddles told, with all the glee of a mischief-maker, how Oakfield had protested with him (Straddles) about what he was pleased to call "talking freely of ladies," how sensitive he appeared if anybody ever attempted to *chaff* him about his intimacy with the Middletons, and much more of the same sort, which determined Stafford as to his line of conduct. He immediately called on the Middletons, and took care to be seen two or three nights riding by their carriage on the course, and being thus prepared, resolved on the next Saturday night (that being the evening when there was generally the largest party at mess) to open his fire. The next Saturday night happened to be the 20th

of June, — Oakfield's birthday, on which day his mother, Margaret, Herby, Rose, and Mary again had their picnic at Lodore, in honor of this Edward, whose battle with society was just about to begin. It was on this Saturday evening, then, in one of the pauses that occur at all large dinner-parties, that Straddles asked in a loud voice, "Were you on the course to-night, Stafford?"

"I? O yes! I was riding with Fanny; did n't you see me?"

"Who is Fanny?" asked Brooks, with maliciously assumed ignorance.

"Fanny Middleton, of course; and a deuced nice little girl she is, and very fond of me, upon my soul."

His words and the laugh that accompanied them, were agony to Oakfield, who, however, sat silent, not feeling justified, so far, in interposing. He knew that he was being observed by all, and made a great effort to master his temper. Stafford, observing his uneasiness, and mistaking the cause of it, went on more freely. The style of his remarks may be imagined, it would be painful to record them, when suddenly he was interrupted by Oakfield, who, with a flushed face, but in a calm, and still courteous tone, said, "Mr. Stafford!" Stafford turned abruptly upon him, and a dead silence ensued. "You can hardly be aware, but I now inform you, that I have the honor to be on terms of intimate friendship, both with Mr. Middleton and his sister."

"Well, sir?"

"I should have thought it unnecessary to add that it is extremely unpleasant to me to hear the name of the latter used with freedom, not to say disrespect, at a public mess-table."

A flush of triumph, passion, and excitement suffused Stafford's dark, lowering countenance, as he exclaimed in his loudest, coarsest tone, his passion carrying him away as he went on: —

"And who the devil do you suppose cares whom you are intimate with, or what is unpleasant to you? and who gave you authority to dictate to me or any other officer about respect or disrespect? I suppose you imagine, Mr. Oakfield, that because your impertinence was once tolerated you may presume again. You 've mistaken your man, sir; I never allow impertinence, especially from one who, for all I know, may be a hypocrite and a coward."

After uttering these words with intense vehemence he flung himself back in his chair, cast a glance at Straddles, as if for applause, and waited the result. The whole party were completely silent, waiting for what should follow. Oakfield's face was the deepest crimson, and his frame shook with emotion that could have been hardly mistaken for fear; for a few seconds he kept his eye upon Stafford, and from the nervous motion of his lip it might be seen what passion had to be overcome before he could turn round and say clearly, though not certainly in so calm a tone as heretofore, —

"Captain Colt, you are the senior officer present, I appeal to you whether an officer is thus to be unprovokedly insulted at the mess-table?"

Nothing could have fallen in better with Stafford's wishes; he knew Colt to be a poor, weak nonentity, whom the least expression of regimental feeling would be sufficient to overcome; he perceived too that his old bad influence was beginning to work again.

"O no, Mr. Oakfield, that 's not the way we do things in this regiment; we 're not at school now; you can't get off by going and telling; if you wish to set up to correct our manners for us, you must be ready to take the consequence of your damned impudence."

This time Oakfield was prepared, and it was with almost his usual composure that he said again, "Captain Colt, you

hear this and allow it! In that case," he added, as the wretched captain affected not to hear, and cast an imploring glance at Stafford, "I have but one alternative," and he rose and left the table. The conversation that had been entirely suspended during the scene, now broke forth violently. Colt, who was half afraid of the consequences of his own cowardice, affected to look upon the thing as a matter of no importance, and mumbled out something about "foolish boys." Brooks and Straddles were loud in their admiration of Stafford.

"He 's got it at last; I thought Stafford would soon bring him to his level."

Stafford himself sat in full enjoyment of the contemptible adulation.

"I suppose I shall have to give him a fight," he said magnificently.

"Are you sure he 'll want it?" sneered Straddles; this seemed to be the general impression.

"O, confound it," lisped Whistles, "he *must* fight, you know."

"I bet you ten to one he does n't," said Straddles; "I know how he 'll get off."

"How, how?" shouted several voices.

"How? eh! why, come the religious dodge."

A roar of laughter followed the suggestion.

"Well, I don't know," said Perkins, whose cricket sympathies led him to have more liking for Oakfield than any of the rest, "it 's my opinion there 's very little white feather about Oakfield; I thought he was going to shy a bottle at your head at first, Stafford."

"O, did you?" said the hero, to whom this speech was very unwelcome.

"Yes, I did upon my honor, and he was devilish near doing it too; and by Jove, I don't think he 'd have been far wrong, if he had."

This might have led to scene number two, had not the majority, who wished to have scene number one well out, interfered.

"If that 's your opinion, Perkins, you 'd better offer yourself to be Oakfield's friend, for upon my soul he 's got very few friends here." And another laugh rewarded Straddles's facetious glance round the table.

"Thank you for the hint, Straddles," said Perkins; "more to the purpose than anything you 've said for a fortnight. Good evening to you, gentlemen," and he rose and hastened out to Oakfield's quarters. He found Oakfield in his own verandah, walking up and down with faster steps than people usually take in the hot weather, evidently engaged in exciting meditation. He did not see Perkins, who, on his part, though bent upon what he honestly believed to be a work of charity, felt embarrassed as to how he should begin.

"Well, Oakfield!" he said in a friendly voice.

Oakfield started.

"What, Perkins! is that you? Come in." And he led the way into the house, lighted a candle, and ordered tea. He divined the motive of Perkins's visit, and though he would rather have been left alone that night to think matters over and brace himself for the struggle which he knew must come, yet he felt that he could not and would not go out of his way to avoid coming to the point. They both sat silent for some time. At last Perkins blurted out, "Awkward business this, Oakfield. The fact is," he added, after a pause, during which Oakfield made no reply, getting up and walking up and down the room as a relief to the difficulty he felt in speaking his mind, "the fact is, I thought Stafford behaved very badly to you to-night, and as you have not — excuse me, but you know it yourself — *many* friends in the regiment, why I came over to offer you my services; there, the murder 's out."

"It would be absurd to affect not to understand you, Perkins; in the first place, let me thank you heartily for what I well know is most kindly meant, but I am afraid we differ essentially as to the line of conduct I ought to adopt."

Perkins opened his eyes, looked doubtfully at Oakfield, but said nothing.

"You meant to offer your services to take a message from me to Stafford?"

"Of course."

"But, as I do not intend to send any message, I shall have no occasion to trouble you."

"You don't mean to send a message?" gasped Perkins.

"No."

"You won't fight him?"

"Distinctly not."

"O my God!" said poor Perkins, in real distress. It was not strange in Perkins; he had been brought up with the idea; he could not account for a man's, much more an officer's, refusing to resent a gross insult in the usual manner, but by supposing him to be a coward; and to do the good man justice, this supposition was really painful to him. "They said he 'd come the religious dodge," he exclaimed, in a mournful, soliloquizing tone.

Oakfield could not forbear laughing at this speech, and the way in which it was said, though sufficiently far from being in a laughing mood. "It 's no good our discussing the matter, I fear," he said, "for we should never agree. You suppose I am afraid to go out with Stafford."

"Why," said the other, "you say you certainly won't fight him, — did n't you say so?"

"Yes, undoubtedly; nor will I; but as you have been so very good-natured, Perkins, and meant, I know, so very kindly, in coming over here, I will tell you what I should not condescend to tell any one else in the regiment, that I am not in the least afraid."

Perkins was half taken aback by the cool, decided way in which Oakfield said this, as though his assertion must at once remove all doubt on the subject. "I fear you won't get people to believe that, you know; they 'll say, if he 's not afraid, why does n't he fight? What *can* you say to that?"

"I shall say nothing to the 'people' you speak of; I tell *you* that I am not afraid; don't you think it must be a sufficiently painful thing to be obliged to say so?" and his burning cheek pointed forcibly this last question. "Perkins," he resumed abruptly, "do you think I should tell a lie?"

"No," said the other promptly.

"If a lot of people accused me of stealing, and I denied it, and said, 'I am not a thief,' should not you, from what you know of me, be inclined to believe me?"

"Yes, of course; thief! absurd!"

"Well, why doubt me now, when I tell you as distinctly that I am not a coward? Heavens! is it not pain greater than fifty duel-fightings for a *man* to have to repeat three times, in as many minutes, that he is not base, that he is not a craven?"

"But, my dear Oakfield," said Perkins, half touched, half bewildered, "just think of the world, what they 'll say: upon my honor I half believe you; I said in the mess-room that I knew you did not funk. But then," he added, with a wofully puzzled look, "why don't you challenge him?"

"Because I think it would be foolish, dishonorable, and wicked, to do so."

"As to the wicked, I don't know anything about that, and I don't see that it has much to do with it; but what you mean by calling the satisfaction of a gentleman dishonorable, I profess I don't understand. My goodness! have you no idea what the world will say?"

"Yes, a very distinct idea."

"Well! and you 're not afraid?"

"No," interrupted Oakfield, "I have told you I am not afraid. Come," he added, "it is no good our talking about it; I should have to talk till next week to explain fully to you my reasons, and meanwhile we shall only disagree painfully. I thank you again for your kindness in coming here; I have shown my gratitude by making a sacrifice, and saying that which pride and self-respect would both induce me to leave unsaid. I shall be sorry if you, or any honest man, have a bad opinion of me; but for the rest, I tell you I can bear it. Good night."

They shook hands, and Perkins walked home very mournfully. "I can't make it out," he said to himself, "I cannot comprehend it; he can*not* be a funk. What on earth am I to say to that blackguard Stafford to-morrow? I 've a great mind to fight him myself."

His sorrow passed off in a deep sigh, as this last relieving thought flashed across him, and he tumbled into bed. There was laughing and exulting in the 90th regiment the next morning. Straddles and Brooks went over very early in the morning to Perkins's quarters.

"Well, old fellow," exclaimed Brooks, "who was right? does he show fight?"

"I have nothing to say about the matter," answered poor Perkins, sulkily.

"What, did n't you go to his quarters last night?"

"Yes."

"Well, he did not send a message?"

"I told you he did n't."

"He won't fight then?"

"Go and ask him yourself," said Perkins, impatiently, unwilling to disclose the whole truth; "only I advise you not to try him too far, for by Jove, though he has queer notions, which I don't profess to comprehend, yet I believe still that there is no white feather about him."

So saying, Perkins flung himself out of the house, leaving his two brother officers to make the most of what he had told them. They were in a state of great excitement; it seemed evident that Oakfield did not intend to be the challenger, but to complete his overthrow it was necessary that he should refuse Stafford's challenge. They instantly rode off to their hero's bungalow, and, waking him, told him what they had gathered from Perkins's reluctant testimony; and Straddles at last, to his infinite joy, succeeded in getting authority to go to Oakfield and demand satisfaction on the part of Stafford for having ventured to interfere and censure that gentleman at the mess-table. In the fulness of his glee at being invested with the important character of "second," Straddles quite overlooked the monstrosity of the message he was charged with, and as it was still not more than five o'clock, and, as he said, with great magnificence, "the less time lost about these affairs the better," he mounted his horse, and, in company with the devoted Brooks, rode off to Oakfield's bungalow. They found him out; the bearer informed them that the Sahib was out; gone, he believed, to the Judge Sahib's,* that is, to Mr. Middleton's.

"Was the Sahib riding?"

"No, the Sahib had his horse with him, but was walking."

So Straddles, to whose impatient mind the idea of a whole day's delay was intolerable, determined to ride towards the Civil lines in the hope of overtaking him. They soon saw Oakfield, walking, with his gray Arab, a very handsome horse given him by Mr. Middleton some time before, led behind him. Oakfield was, as may be supposed, going down to take counsel with his friends; not indeed so much to take

* Natives generally speak of a European officer by his office rather than his title; thus a magistrate is generally called "Judge Sahib."

counsel (for his mind was made up) as to get the sympathy which he knew he should find, and which, with a pardonable weakness, he longed for; for that soft complexion and gentle voice told a true tale of a gentle, sympathizing heart, to which these stormy contests were charged with keenest suffering. He would, indeed, considering what was the origin of the whole affair, have been glad that Mr. Middleton should remain in entire ignorance, but this he knew was impossible, and so he thought "he may as well know the exact truth from me at once." He had enough to occupy his thoughts as he walked along. The storm of contempt and ignominy which he knew awaited him in his regiment he was comparatively indifferent to; he felt more bitterly conscious of the cowardly sneers of those false fools, who, while professing to think him "a very good young man, quite right not to fight a duel," and so on, would at the same time shrug their shoulders, and say, with a self-complacent smile, that "they were glad their tempers had not been so severely tried, they really feared their hot blood might have been tempted to resent such insolence," and so on; of those hypocrites, who, not daring to deny the principle on which he acted, would yet in their hearts despise him, and with their lying lips utter insinuations against him for practising what they cantingly preached; he thought, too, of the possibility of his temper being yet farther tried; of men thinking they might take advantage of his refusal to fight; and it was while his thoughts were thus engaged that Brooks and Straddles came up with him, their syces* running after them. Straddles dismounted, but still Oakfield took no notice of him. He was indeed intensely excited, and walked on, determined not to be the first mover in whatever might ensue. Fool as Straddles was, he could detect something in

* *Syce*, — Anglicè, groom.

Oakfield's manner, in the compressed lips, the flushed face, the sparkling eye, the firm tread, that suggested that his errand might not be a very pleasant one after all. But Brooks was looking on, and it was too late to retreat. Stepping up to Oakfield, therefore, he took off his hat according to what he conceived, from Lever and other authorities, to be the approved fashion of opening proceedings, and said, though not in so commanding a tone of voice as he could have wished, "Mr. Oakfield!"

Oakfield came to a dead halt, and turned round with an abrupt energy that was rather startling. But the Rubicon was passed, and he must go on.

"I am the bearer of a message, of what nature you may imagine, from Mr. Stafford."

"I understand you, sir; I can receive no such message from Mr. Stafford; I wish you good morning."

Encouraged by this answer, Straddles plucked up again; planting himself in front of Oakfield as the latter was about to resume his walk, he said, in his usual flighty tone, "O, I must have a more distinct answer than that, you know."

"Be silent, sir," said Oakfield, sternly, "and stand out of my way."

"O, it 's no good talking big, you know," said Straddles, who thought he had it all his own way now; "one isn't easily frightened by a man who lets himself be called an impudent coward, and then goes down to his friend, the civilian, to swear the peace."

Unhappy Straddles! the cup of Oakfield's indignation was full, and human nature could endure no more. He seized Straddles by the collar, who resisted, but Oakfield was at any time the more powerful man, and now, in the outflowing of his pent-up wrath, he could have held ten Straddleses. Grasping his collar in his left hand with the force of a vice, with his right he raised the heavy riding-

whip he carried, and thrashed the poor fool till he roared for mercy. The whole transaction took less time in the performance than it does in the reading; flinging him from him with a force that ultimately deposited him recumbent on the other side of the road, half stunned, altogether bewildered, he just said to the gaping Brooks, who sat on his horse, all eyes, and arms, and legs, "Better look to your friend, sir," mounted his horse, and rode on to the Middletons'. He found Mr. Middleton and his sister drinking tea in the verandah, according to their custom; he joined them, and tried to take his usual share in the conversation, as though nothing extraordinary had occurred; but it would not do; he was still a very young man, and had not acquired that power, which only long practice can give, of entirely suppressing all trace of emotion. Mr. Middleton had observed, when he first got off his horse, his flushed appearance, and such other vestiges of his recent excitement as had not yet disappeared; and now his short answers, sometimes his listless inattention, so different from his usual manner, confirmed his impression that there was something the matter.

"Are you ill?" he asked at length, with some anxiety.

Oakfield started, and felt annoyed that his looks should have betrayed him.

"No," he replied, "thank you, quite well; but — in short, I want to speak to you for a minute," and he rose as though about to retire; then, recollecting himself, turned to Miss Middleton, and said, "I really beg your pardon, I don't know what you will think of my thus coolly intimating that —"

"That I am *de trop*," said Miss Middleton, laughing at his embarrassment, though obviously not in the least offended. "O never mind! you want advice, of course; I always know when people come for advice; I am used to it, because you know everybody comes to be advised by Henry; not

that they often take his advice either, I believe; the worse for them." So saying, she went into the house, not without some curiosity, of course, nor, in spite of her gay manner, without anxiety.

"Well, Oakfield, my dear fellow," said Mr. Middleton, kindly laying his hand on the other's arm, "what is it? I knew there was something wrong directly I saw you."

"Why the matter is this, — I have been grossly insulted, then called out by the man who insulted me, refused to meet him, and flogged the person who brought the message and added to it gratuitous impertinence of his own, — there, you have the matter in a category."

"When did all this happen?" asked Mr. Middleton, suppressing any show of surprise.

"The insult last night; the challenging and flogging half an hour ago."

"Ha! no wonder you appeared excited: and now will you tell me the particulars?"

"I came for that purpose, little thinking what additional matter the course of my ride would furnish me with." And he began by premising to Mr. Middleton why he told him what it would be better he should not have known at all; explained the dislike with which he knew he had been, for some time, regarded in the corps; and, lastly, related the scene of the preceding night, and the Straddles episode of that morning. Mr. Middleton listened with deep attention, but gave no sign of sympathy or disapprobation.

"Excuse my appearing cold," he said to Oakfield, observing that the other looked rather disappointed at his silence; "I must, if you kindly take me into your confidence at all, hear the matter judicially before I can take up either side, — with or against you. Will you, on this understanding, endure a cross-examination?"

"Certainly."

"Well then, are you quite sure that you addressed Captain Colt in such a manner as to make yourself heard by him?"

"Perfectly sure that he heard me on both occasions when I spoke to him; there was a dead silence at the table, and everybody looked to him for his answer. Indeed, the second time there can be no doubt, for Stafford, who, by his answer, must have heard it, was a good deal further from me than Colt."

"Are you certain that, when you at first remonstrated with Stafford, you used no more irritating expressions than what you have related to me?"

"I am certain that I have rather over than under-colored what I said."

"When you left the mess, did you intend to take any steps with reference to what had passed?"

"I intended to take none."

"Well, but Oakfield," continued Mr. Middleton, relaxing his cross-examination tone, "don't you know that the articles of war expect an officer to resent any affront offered to him, for the honor of the service?"

"I really can't help what the articles of war expect in this case; resenting a personal affront is a matter for my own personal consideration; — if I feel myself none the worse for what that man said to me; if I am conscious that I was restrained by no other than a right feeling from not giving vent to my temper at the time; if I know that to resent it now by calling the man out —"

"The military authorities do not demand that," interrupted Mr. Middleton, "only that you resent an affront."

"How resent it?"

"I suppose by reporting it to the higher powers, that it may be made the ground of judicial investigation."

"I did all that officiality has a right to demand of me,"

said Oakfield, getting up and walking up and down the verandah, "when I twice appealed to that man Colt; — if he likes to take it up officially he can; I shall not."

"Will you let the world then say that you were insulted and took no notice of it?"

Oakfield stopped and looked inquiringly at Mr. Middleton, whose face was, however, unreadable.

"You are trying me," he said; "you need not fear; I have often considered this matter of resenting affronts, and am persuaded, that for any authority to dictate to me in a matter of close personal concernment, — in a matter too of moral conduct, — is a gross tyranny not to be submitted to for an instant."

"But how about Straddles? What shall you say if he demands satisfaction?"

"I shall say nothing; no more than I would to a thief who tried to rob me, and demanded satisfaction because I knocked him down. I should give the thief into custody, and probably send in charges against Straddles."

"Suppose, and bear with me, for it shall be my last question, suppose Stafford, seeing that you take no notice of what he has said, and have refused his challenge, should insult you again, gratuitously and more grossly; what should you do then? Excuse me, I see this is painful to you; it must be; but believe me, it is well you should see all your difficulties fairly."

"You are right, and this which you suppose, I have myself thought of: I think, in the first place, it is a very unlikely case. Society might and would condemn me, but neither would it suffer him to go on breaking through all bounds of decency; but still (you see I will not shirk the difficulty), suppose he did; I am inclined to lay down no rule for myself; but, acting honestly and upon conviction throughout, trust, in the event of such a thing as you suppose

taking place, to the impulse of the moment to carry me right. Because, recollect, I have this great advantage over him, that I, from the first, repudiate all society's laws and maxims upon the subject; am utterly free from, while he is still restrained by them."

"So if I were to advise you," said Mr. Middleton, half smiling, "to go home, report Stafford's conduct to your commanding officer, and write an apology to Straddles — Well, well," seeing that Oakfield was going to interrupt him, "don't be afraid, I'm not going to advise you to do so: come inside, however, it 's getting too hot here."

They went into the breakfast-room, and immediately the servants began to prepare the house and all the anti-hot-wind panoply for the day. The tatties darkened the room, the doors were shut, and all was made tight to weather the heat till sunset. Oakfield half lay down on a couch under the punkah; Mr. Middleton in his turn commenced a quarter-deck walk up and down the room, with the air of a man who wants to make a speech, but has difficulties in beginning.

"You must n't think," he at last began, in a very different tone from that he had previously used, "that I am insensible to what you must have suffered, and must still suffer, nor that I do not heartily admire the way in which you have taken the first opportunity of carrying out the principle of disobedience to the lying code of society's laws of honor, which we have often, ere now, agreed upon. As to the origin of the whole matter, this is of course for both of us a subject of most painful delicacy; and I can well understand that nothing hurts you more in this transaction than having been the most innocent cause of mixing up her name with a fracas of any kind. But I owe it to you to say distinctly that you said and did no more than, as a gentleman and a friend, you were bound in honor to say and do."

"Then," said Oakfield, evidently much relieved, "you

have removed the only small shadow that at all haunted me of doubt and anxiety; and I am now perfectly indifferent as to what becomes of it all."

Mr. Middleton nodded by way of answer to this, and went on, "I have often heard of this man Stafford; he is so infamous that I doubt whether even the laws of honor would insist upon your fighting with him; but this is a minor point: to refuse to fight a duel is, in these days, nothing; it is hardly any martyrdom at all; to refuse, however, to take any notice of an insult, brings you at once to an issue with society. I need not tell you that all my sympathies will be on your side of the battle. Then comes the affair of this fellow Straddles; and here, — besides that human temper must not be tried too far, — besides one's natural satisfaction at seeing impertinence and bullying punished, — I will not deny that I consider it a most fortunate circumstance on other grounds. It just gives the necessary balance to the point which you will have most to insist upon; while you declare, as you must declare, for you cannot take lower ground, that your fear of God makes it impossible for you to fear man, it will be well (not at all necessary, I acknowledge, for the satisfaction of your own conscience, the only really essential point, but still it will be pleasant and gratifying to human weakness) to remind scoffers that it does not follow, that, because we choose to obey God's and nature's code of honor, we should in all cases abstain from the weapons of the flesh, — a true expression, though it may sound like one of Habakkuk Mucklewrath's; that there are occasions when we knock a man down with as clear a conscience as a soldier draws his sword in battle: — so far as to my agreement with you; not of much consequence anybody's agreement to an honest brave man who has made up his mind; but such as it is, you have it fully. I catechised you partly for your own sake, that you might per-

ceive distinctly your position and its consequences: that last question was really rather a puzzler to myself; but I am satisfied your answer is the right one, and that you should go right on with a clear conscience, trusting to that to lead you through difficulties as they present themselves. You know I do not often use strong expressions, let them have additional weight if I use them now: I may have appeared cold to you at first, let me convince you that I feel warmly; let me assure you, dear Oakfield, that my sincere affection and friendship for you would have outweighed any difference of opinion as to what course you should have pursued in this affair; as it is, strengthened by the most entire agreement and admiration, they are more than ever yours." They shook hands with hearty cordiality, and for some time remained silent. Presently, Mr. Middleton resumed, "However, we must prepare for battle. I suppose there is sure to be an inquiry into this business?"

"I suppose so."

"Well then, it is clearly to our advantage that the facts should be accurately known in the end; so just tell me over again, word for word, what happened, that I may write it down." This was done accordingly, the paper was signed and dated by Mr. Middleton, and put carefully aside.

"Well, I must be off," said Oakfield, rising as soon as this business was completed.

"Why not spend the day here? it is far too hot for you now to go back; why, it must be nearly seven o'clock."

"I must go though, notwithstanding; it would n't do to appear to wish to keep out of the way."

"Perhaps not," assented Mr. Middleton.

"And besides," — and Oakfield hesitated.

"You mean with regard to ———," said Mr. Middleton, quickly.

Oakfield nodded.

"O, don't have another thought about that; I insist upon it, Oakfield, that you do not allow this business to make any difference in your coming to us. I shall take care that she hears nothing of the origin of the dispute."

So Oakfield agreed to return to dinner in the evening, and then galloped off towards cantonments. His careful bearer had long ago put up the tatties and darkened the house, so that upon first entering his room, out of the glare of the sunlight, he did not perceive that there was already somebody there, and started at hearing the voice of Lieutenant Taylor, the adjutant of the regiment, close by him."

"Mr. Oakfield!"

Oakfield begged his pardon for his not having spoken to him, and so on.

"I heard from your servants that you would be back to breakfast, so I took the liberty of waiting. I am sent, as you may imagine, by Colonel Pringle; and when I tell you that Mr. Stafford and Mr. Brooks have been at his bungalow this morning, and that Mr. Straddles is reported sick, you will hardly be surprised at my telling you that I am come for your sword." Lieutenant Taylor departed with Oakfield's sword, and the latter being thus symbolically put under arrest, sat down to meditate over his solitary breakfast.

CHAPTER XIV.

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning, fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy golden image which thou hast set up."

DANIEL iii. 16 – 18.

WHEN Oakfield left Straddles lying in the road, he did not think it necessary to trouble himself as to how that gentleman was to find his way back to cantonments. Brooks did not exactly know what to say. It may be allowed that there probably is some awkwardness in opening a conversation with a man who has been horsewhipped. Straddles on his part did not seem inclined to say anything; he mounted his horse with some difficulty and rode home. On reaching the bungalow, he found himself suffering so severely from his well-merited castigation, that he allowed Brooks to send for the doctor. The doctor was a fussy little man who loved gossip as he did his life; he was not likely, having once got hold of such a matter, to let it sleep for want of stirring. He rubbed his hands, talked about his duty, and immediately went to report this "very extraordinary occurrence" to Colonel Pringle. Colonel Pringle was, as he himself would proudly say, a gentleman of the old school. He was, in short, a crack man, put to command this crack regiment; and when he heard of a man being called a coward, and then refusing to fight, he said, with great decision, that the

young fellow was a disgrace to the service, and he should do his best to get him out of the 90th regiment at any rate. So he sent the Adjutant to put Oakfield under arrest, as a preliminary step to reporting the business to the Brigadier for inquiry. In the course of the day, Straddles sent Brooks with a hostile message to Oakfield, who, having already enough on his hands, cut the matter short by saying, that, if the whole regiment challenged him, he should refuse to go out; and furthermore, that, if anybody else came to him with a challenge, he should send in charges against both the bearer and the sender of the message. As duelling, whatever may be thought of it, is still a military offence, which a military tribunal *must* punish if brought before it by a vigorous prosecutor, Straddles and Co. were fain to content themselves with this answer, solacing themselves the while with anathemas against Oakfield both loud and deep. And yet it was strange that while "funk," "bully," "coward," were the words in everybody's mouth, yet the real impression was the same with Perkins's: few or none could persuade themselves that Oakfield was really a coward: they were, in fact, like honest Perkins, puzzled; just as society always is, and must be, most ludicrously puzzled, when it catches a tartar in the shape of a man who thinks for himself, and drives a coach and six through its pasteboard regulations;—puzzled and powerless; for the more it thunders its anathema, the more provokingly the traitor smiles and says, "I deny your jurisdiction."

Oakfield being, by his arrest, confined to the station, and unable to go to Mr. Middleton, Mr. Middleton often came to him. The Court of Inquiry met, and was dissolved; and on the 15th of July, the very day that Oakfield passed the Interpreter's examination, being obliged to attend the Committee as an attainted man, without his sword, he received information that he was about to be tried by court-martial

on charges which would be afterwards furnished to him. Stafford was to be tried also (so even-handed is military justice) for having sent a challenge.

"Well," he said to Mr. Middleton, who was with him when he received this intelligence in a demi-official note from the Adjutant, "it 's a good thing to have got this Hindee examination over before entering upon this new battle."

"You mean to give battle then?"

"Clearly; — how absurd a dilemma social morality finds itself placed in, being thus obliged, in deference to the law which it outwardly acknowledges, to try Stafford for merely obeying the law which he and it really believe; for disobeying which latter, and treating it as a contemptible idol, they are to proceed afterwards to try me."

Oakfield of course found himself living almost in complete seclusion. Perkins came to see him occasionally, but they differed so irreconcilably on the question which was naturally uppermost in the thoughts of both, that these visits, though kindly meant and kindly taken, were rather an infliction to both parties. There were one or two officers in other regiments who ventured to take Oakfield's part against the cry of the mob, and who, as a point of honor, to show that they did not join in the general opinion, came to visit him. He felt obliged to them, but with a natural reserve shrunk from "explaining" his conduct to any but his intimate friends; and under this head he numbered only three in India, — Mr. Middleton, Stanton, and Wykham. With the first he was in daily communication; to the other two he wrote at considerable length.

It was curious, even to himself, the especial pains with which he labored to make himself understood by Wykham; he felt far more sure of being supported by Stanton; but the thing which caused him most anxiety was to know what Wykham would think. So it is that one man influences

another, he knows not how; we shrink from the blame, and love the praise, of the young, harum-scarum fellow; while to that sedate friend, who is held up to us an example, who has a why and a wherefore for every word he utters, we listen altogether unmoved. We feel that the one has with him really a more cogent why and wherefore than the other, though it be unexpressed and even inexpressible by logic. So when Stanton and Wykham's letters came, as they did, by the same post, Oakfield immediately opened the former, being half afraid of the other. It was short, friendly, and, after old Stanton's fashion, contained a piece of not flattering, but extremely sensible, caution. "Lastly," so he concluded his letter, "remember that to defy persecution is one thing, to prolong the defiance for the sake of notoriety is another, and that the first very easily degenerates into the last. I can conceive a man so constituted and so circumstanced that his principal temptation will be a superfluous opposition rather than a timid concession to the world. But do not imagine that I think your opposition hitherto has been superfluous or artificial; it has, I am sure, been forced upon you; only the danger I allude to is a treacherous one, which it is well to bear in mind. You could not have a truer friend and a better adviser than Middleton; I should say depend upon him, were it not so much better that you should, as I know you do, depend upon yourself. Nevertheless, if I can be of the slightest use to you at your trial, let me know, and I will come over instantly. My own kind regards to Middleton and his sister. I think perhaps, if I did come to Ferozepore, I might fall upon Stafford and slay him; so I am as well away. Let me hear what Wykham says."

"True for you, old fellow," soliloquized Oakfield after reading the above; "I have thought of that rock you mention; but as long as I feel honestly persuaded that I am not

fighting my own battle, but truth's, I will go ahead, and not stop short for every fancied danger. And now for Wykham."

Wykham's letter was as follows: —

"My dear Oakfield: —

"I had heard strange stories about you up here, and was glad to get at the truth in your own letter. My first impulse was to lay a dâk, rush down to Ferozepore, and shoot Stafford. On second thoughts, I found that this would be a very impertinent interference with you. On reading your letter, indeed, I find that you put a positive veto upon the shooting plan altogether, so I suppose that hound must get off free. You ask me what I think of your conduct? Now, I tell you candidly that, had any one told me, as an imaginary case, what passed at your mess-table that night, I should have said it was impossible for an honorable man to overlook such remarks as those made by Stafford. But when I hear that *you have done so*, my opinion is altered. I know, dear Oakfield, that there is not a more honorable man in India than you, though you always had these queer notions. I have told you often that I cannot quite agree with you as to the opinion of the world. I have all my life been taught to respect and to dread it; you say it is safer to despise than respect it. This independence may be all very well in theory, but surely a man who carries it into practice, and gets universally cut in consequence, will be forced to reconsider it? How on earth are we to live, if any snob may with impunity insult us when and where he likes? Then again as to Straddles; I almost cried with joy at the account of the licking you gave him; but surely, if a bigger man were to horsewhip you, you would think it very hard not to have satisfaction. I have always looked upon duelling as the great protection from the dominion of mere bullying and brute force. And yet, as often as I read your letter, I seem to follow you all through, and to think you right; and again, when I consider the business without your letter before me, then I do not see how you *can* be right. As to want of pluck, I never dreamed of that for a moment; only admired the plucky way in which you (as I candidly acknowledge I dare not do) carry out your principles. I heard one man saying something

impertinent about you the other day, and contradicted him so decidedly that I was very near being engaged in a little quarrel on my account. I do not know what I have said; my opinion changes every two minutes; only I am quite certain that whatever you think, you do, and for that I admire you heartily; and I am also quite certain that you have more real courage than I and all the 90th put together; and I honestly believe, though from every association and habit I find it impossible to believe so steadily, that you are right and I am wrong about duelling. Mind, I say this, having just read your letter over again; in five minutes I shall probably think differently; but I never do or shall think differently about you; and if all the 90th round insult you, and you refuse to fight them, I shall be, as I am now, as much as ever, and far more than ever,

"Your affectionate friend,

"Fred. Wykham."

This was more than Oakfield had ventured to expect, and he was greatly pleased. He had now got all the sympathy he expected or wanted; for to his friends at home he maintained a perfect silence on the whole affair; although each mail brought him his letters, as usual, breathing the very spirit of love, and wisdom, and holy courage, which were better than whole bushels of direct advice from a fountain of more ordinary quality.

On the 1st of August both he and Stafford received copies of the charges on which they were respectively to be tried by the same court. Stafford, as senior, had precedence, but his case was soon despatched. He pleaded guilty to the charge of unofficer-like conduct in sending a challenge to fight a duel to Ensign Oakfield; but he pleaded provocation, having been dictated to by one so much his junior; urged the laws of honor, the general tone of the service, as making in his favor; and, in short, threw himself on the mercy of the court.

On the following day, the 2d of August, the far more

exciting trial was to come on, of which we proceed to give a full and accurate report. Mr. Middleton breakfasted with Oakfield the morning of the trial, and drove him over to the artillery mess-house, where the court was to meet at eleven o'clock. It was the first time for some weeks that Mr. Middleton had been in cantonments. Several officers spoke to him, studiously avoiding any recognition of Oakfield, but on these terms Mr. Middleton refused to be addressed. In a short time the court was assembled, the members being seated down the two sides of the mess-table, with the President at the head. At a small table, close to the President, sat Oakfield and Mr. Middleton, and also the Judge Advocate, Captain Larkins. The preliminaries were disposed of, and then the charges were read, as follows : —

1. " For conduct highly unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, in suffering himself on the 20th of June, 1847, to be grossly and publicly insulted at the mess-table of his regiment, and neither reporting to his commanding officer, nor in any way noticing the affront."

2. " For highly unofficer-like conduct, in having, on the morning of the 21st of June, 1847, assaulted Lieutenant H. Straddles of the 90th regiment, N. I., and struck him repeatedly with a riding-whip."

The prosecutor, Colonel Pringle, being called upon, read the following statement : —

" Mr. President and Gentlemen, — when I inform you that I have had the honor to command the 90th regiment for six years, and that this is the first occasion, during that period, on which any officer of the corps has been brought to trial, you may conceive the reluctance and pain with which I come forward now as prosecutor. But how must that pain be increased, when the offence, for which I have been compelled to bring (for the first time) one of the officers under my command before a court-martial, is not mere-

ly a military crime, not merely a breach of military law or a neglect of military duty, but an offence characterized in the charges by the damning description, 'unbecoming the character' (not only 'of an officer,' but) 'of a gentleman!' And of all offences, too, that which is most fatal to the combined character of an officer and a gentleman,— that offence which it is painful even to name,—cowardice! Had it been a crime of less magnitude, I might — I do not say I would — but I might possibly have considered it within the limit of my duty, to suppress anything which might bring a stain upon the hitherto unsullied reputation of my regiment; but I should be unworthy of that regiment, I should be unworthy of the trust reposed in me, of which I am so justly proud, did I suffer our society to remain contaminated by the undisturbed presence of a coward. I am sorry to use strong language, I am sorry to use expressions which may add to what the prisoner must already suffer; but indeed this is a subject on which any officer, any gentleman, any Englishman, may be excused for becoming somewhat excited. You will hear by the evidence, gentlemen, that Mr. Oakfield was publicly addressed at the mess-table, in the presence of a large company, in language which no gentleman — which no man of spirit or of honor — would brook for an instant. I am not vindicating the officer who made use of such language, but I do say, that the author of an insult, who is ready like a man to make good or to withdraw his words, however greatly to be blamed, has yet more claim upon our sympathies than the person who tamely submits to it. I need not trouble you, gentlemen, with details which will be amply narrated in the course of the evidence; I will only say that the prisoner was addressed as 'a hypocrite and a coward'; I am actually, gentlemen, quoting the exact words used; and from that time to this he has rested quietly under the imputation: nay, more, when a brother officer, in a

friendly spirit, tried to represent to him the consequence of such conduct, the ignominy and degradation which must inevitably ensue, he still refused to be excited to a sense of duty, and preferred his own ease and personal security to the trouble and possible danger which might attend the vindication of his honor! Gentlemen, I ask you, whether such an officer is worthy to bear a commission in a noble army? to be enrolled among the members of a gallant and honorable regiment? I know that duelling is forbidden by the articles of war: and although, as an individual, I may regret that what appears to me a lamentable concession to the opinions of those little qualified to judge in such matters should have been so fatal to a practice once universal amongst gentlemen and men of honor, yet it is not for me, in my capacity of prosecutor, to complain of an officer before a military court for not committing what would be, according to the letter, a military crime. I may think that the spirit of military justice would not, in so flagrant a case, have been transgressed by a breach of the letter: or I may think that a brave soldier would have preferred the risk of military punishment to the certainty of personal dishonor. But leaving this, — the prisoner is not charged, nor is it for me to charge him, with not fighting a duel, but with taking no steps at all to resent a gross and public affront, — with resting under it, and by his silence allowing and consenting to it.

"I pass on to the second charge.

"The prisoner is accused, not only of a cowardly indifference to insult, but also of a cowardly assault. There are, I admit, cases where a gentleman may be justified, and even bound, to have recourse to personal chastisement for redress. There are affronts, I say, of such a nature; or an affront may be offered by parties in so inferior a rank in life, that any other mode of obtaining satisfaction is put out of the

question. But I appeal to the court whether, in this case, either the parties or the circumstances justified such a course. Lieutenant Straddles is the prisoner's equal by birth, his senior in the service, and, I need not add, in my opinion, his superior in reputation. He was the bearer of a message, — unmilitary indeed, but not disgraceful nor ungentlemanly; and if, stung with indignation at the reception he and his message met with, he unfortunately gave utterance to expressions inconsistent with that quiet neutral bearing which the etiquette of his position required, yet was the prisoner, of all people in the world, — the prisoner who, the night before, had submitted to be called a hypocrite and a coward, — was he the man to play the Hector and the bravo in the public road? Or is not his conduct all of a piece, and is not this taking advantage of superior physical power another symptom of that temper which dares to be bold only in the absence of danger? These facts will all be proved by incontestable evidence; and if proved, I cannot conceive that any assembly of officers will view the matter in a different light from what I do myself. I repeat, that if I have used strong language, it is but the expression of the indignation natural (I trust not discreditable) to an old soldier, who grieves that the hitherto unsullied honor of his regiment should be disgraced by the most contemptible of all vices, — cowardice. I have no personal ill-will to the young man who is on his trial; both I and my officers were ready to receive him as a brother officer should be received, into our friendly and hitherto united society; and although I early perceived and regretted symptoms of a temper not accordant with the high tone which it had been my pride to observe in the regiment, yet I would have indignantly denied, had it been told me three months ago, that he could be deficient in the first quality of a soldier, — courage! I have no personal ill-will to him; I may, indeed, pity and shrink from, but

have no reason to dislike him; but I cannot, for an instant, allow his feelings, or the feelings of any individual, to make me forget the duty which I owe to my profession, my regiment, and myself."

The Colonel resumed his seat. His speech was a bad one for the prosecution, favorable to the defence. He had made the common, but very egregious mistake, of being too savage. Men's sympathies are always with those who are down; the prisoner is almost always an object of compassion, and any unnecessary fierceness, or appearance of undue pressing, on the part of the accuser, increases this feeling. Many who had been abusing Oakfield for the last month felt for him, as they observed him listening to the above harangue; sitting, without once changing his position, with his eye fixed on Colonel Pringle, as he read his statement, and his face flushing from time to time at the cruel repetition of the insults it contained. When it was over, he leaned back; the flush disappearing left his face very pale; he looked at Mr. Middleton, whose countenance expressed far more visibly the strong indignation he felt, smiled, and shook his head.

The first witness called for the prosecution was Lieutenant Stafford. Being, of course, himself still under arrest, he also appeared without his sword, and took his seat at the same table with Oakfield and the Judge Advocate. All the proceedings of a court-martial have to be recorded; every question that is put by the prosecutor, or the prisoner, or the court, has to be handed, in writing, to the Judge Advocate, who alone conducts the examination of all witnesses, and is entered by him, together with the answer, in the proceedings. The following questions were put to Stafford, after he had been sworn by the prosecutor: —

"Were you dining at the mess of your regiment on the evening of the 20th of June?"

"I was."

"Was the prisoner also present on that occasion?"

"Yes."

"Do you recollect anything that passed between him and you in the course of that evening?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Relate what passed, to the court."

"I was speaking to Lieutenant Straddles, who sat next me, about a young lady with whom I have the honor to be acquainted, when I was interrupted by Mr. Oakfield, who told me that the lady whom I was speaking of was a friend of his, or something of the sort. I was naturally annoyed at being thus publicly reproved by one so much my junior, and said, that it made no difference to me who were and who were not his friends, or words to that effect. He proceeded to say that I was impertinent or disrespectful, — I forget which; and then I lost my temper, and told him that his interference was uncalled for and insolent, and that I would not be dictated to by one who, for all I knew, might be a hypocrite or a coward."

"Do you remember using those precise words?"

"Yes, distinctly; those very words."

"And what did the prisoner say?"

"He said nothing to me; he addressed a remark to some other officer, — Captain Colt, I think, — appealing for his protection; upon which I told him, that we were not schoolboys, and that it was the custom in the 90th for a man to be ready to fight his own battles, without asking for assistance from other people."

"Did the prisoner still say nothing?"

"Nothing to me; he said something to the same effect again, — I believe to Captain Colt, — and then left the table."

"Was the impression upon your own mind that you had offered an affront to Mr. Oakfield?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Did you expect him to resent it?"

"Of course I did."

"It is your opinion that the language you used was such as no gentleman ought to hear without resenting?"

"That is my decided opinion."

"Did the prisoner, upon any subsequent occasion, demand an apology?"

"I never heard a word from him from that time to this?"

The witness was then cross-examined by Oakfield, through the Judge Advocate, in the manner explained above.

"You say that you were speaking to Lieutenant Straddles, who sat next you; did you not speak so as that everybody at the table might have heard you?"

"Very likely I did; I did n't care whether they heard or not."

"Did you not know, before I interfered, that what you were saying was likely to be, in the highest degree, unpleasant and offensive to me?"

"I really don't know that I took the trouble to think about it."

"When I interfered, in the first instance, did I speak civilly or not?"

"O, civilly enough."

This was Stafford's evidence.

Lieutenant Perkins was the second witness for the prosecution. He narrated what had occurred, only coloring the whole more favorably for Oakfield and less so for Stafford, but agreeing with the latter's evidence in all essential particulars. He was then asked, —

"Did you not go over to Mr. Oakfield's quarters shortly after that officer had left the mess-table?"

"I did."

"Was your impression, when you went over to see Mr. Oakfield, that he had been insulted by Lieutenant Stafford?"

"Certainly, infamously insulted."

"Have you any objection to state what passed between you and Mr. Oakfield that evening?"

"I can't remember half of what passed; we talked for a long time. I know the drift of it was, that I advised him to challenge Stafford, and he said he would n't."

"Did you not suggest that there might be some other mode of resenting the insult that had been offered?"

"No, I don't think I did; I don't see that there was any other."

At this answer the court smiled, and the prosecutor looked foolish.

"Did you not suggest reporting the matter to the commanding officer?" was the next question; but the President, a gray-haired, handsome-looking Colonel of Artillery, disallowed it, as a leading question, and as having been in effect already answered. Oakfield proceeded to cross-examine Perkins.

"Do you think I was justified in interrupting Lieutenant Stafford as I did at the mess-table?"

"Decidedly, you were bound to do so."

"Was Lieutenant Stafford's violent language provoked by any incivility in my words or manner?"

"Most certainly not."

"Has not Lieutenant Stafford been long known in the regiment as a professed duellist?"

This question was objected to as doubtful, by the Judge Advocate, and the court was cleared to consider it. Courts-martial are justly and scrupulously jealous of general insinuations as to character; but in this case it was urged by some of the members that the point might really be essential to

the defence, as all would admit that a notoriously quarrelsome man might be the object of special treatment; so the question was allowed, and the answer was, —

"I don't know exactly what is meant by 'professed duellist'; he is known to have been out several times."

"Do you not consider him a quarrelsome man?"

"Yes, I do."

"Was not the long and short of your advice to me, when you came over to my quarters, to call Mr. Stafford out?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Do you think that the regiment would have considered my character as being entirely clear, if I had not challenged Mr. Stafford, but reported the matter officially to the commanding officer?"

"Well, I don't think they would."

Re-examined, — "Did you think that the insult offered to the prisoner was such as a gentleman and man of honor was bound to resent?"

"I confess I did."

One or two more witnesses spoke to the facts that had occurred at the mess-table. The fifth witness for the prosecution was Lieutenant Taylor.

"You are Adjutant of the 90th regiment, N. I.?"

"I am."

"Were you present at mess on the 20th of June, when there was a fracas between Lieutenant Stafford and Ensign Oakfield?"

"I was."

"Did you consider the latter to be insulted by the former?"

"There could be no doubt about it."

"No doubt, you mean, that he was insulted?"

"Exactly so."

"Did Mr. Oakfield, at any time, make any verbal or

written report upon the matter to you for the information of the commanding officer?"

"Never."

Lieutenant Straddles was next called; he entered the court with the sheepish air of a man who has to tell a story against himself. He scowled sullenly at Oakfield, who felt more uncomfortable than he had done at any time during the proceedings; for, richly as he knew Straddles had deserved his fate, he could not but pity his present position, having to state publicly that he had been flogged.

"Did you meet Mr. Oakfield on the morning of the 21st of June?"

"Yes, of course I did," said poor Straddles, with a peevishness that excited a titter through the court.

"Please to recall what passed between you on that occasion."

"I went to Mr. Oakfield's house on the morning of the 21st of June, with a message from Lieutenant Stafford."

"What message?" interrupted a member of the court; but Straddles objected to answer this, on the ground that he need not criminate himself, and the excuse was allowed.

"I found him out," he continued, "and was told he was gone down to the civil lines. Lieutenant Brooks and I followed him, and overtook him walking: I got off and delivered my message. He refused, in a very insulting manner, to hear it; whereupon I told him that a man who allowed himself to be called a coward at the mess-table ought to speak more civilly, or something of that kind; and then I added, that I supposed he was going down to the civil lines for the magistrate's protection," — and here Straddles came to a dead halt.

"And what followed, Mr. Straddles?" was asked, encouragingly.

Straddles colored violently, and, as if by a great effort,

bolted out with a rapidity which the Judge Advocate, who had to follow him on paper, was obliged constantly to check, —

"Why, before I knew what he was about, he sprang upon me unexpectedly, and I, being a shorter man a good deal, and quite unprepared, was not able to keep him off at first; and then he struck me with a very heavy whip, so that before I could recover the first disadvantage I was almost completely stunned; which he perceiving, got on his horse and ran away."

There was something ludicrous in the unctuous malice with which, in these last words, Straddles tried to change the complexion of the proceeding.

"Did you report this outrage to your commanding officer?"

"Not till I was called upon to do so by the Adjutant; I should have required a different sort of satisfaction, had I not known, that from such a man as that there was no chance of getting it. As it was, I demanded an apology."

"Did you obtain one?"

"No; I got no answer at all."

Oakfield would not put poor Straddles to the pain of cross-examination, but the court detained him to answer the following questions: —

"Before Mr. Oakfield struck you, did you not tell him that he had allowed himself to be called a coward?"

"Yes, I did; and it was quite true."

"Did you not also say, that you supposed he was going to seek the magistrate's protection?"

"Yes; so I thought he was."

"That will do, sir," and poor Straddles went out of court with an uncomfortable impression that, after all, he had not succeeded in making a good story for himself out of the matter.

Lieutenant Brooks was then called. He confirmed Straddles's evidence, but some important facts were elicited from him in cross-examination.

"Did you hear me tell Mr. Straddles that I would receive no message from Mr. Stafford?"

"I heard you say something to that effect."

"Do you remember what he said then?"

"Not exactly."

"Did you observe his attitude while he spoke?"

"Yes."

"Please to describe it."

"He put himself in your way, as though to detain you."

"Upon that, did I not tell him to stand back?"

"I believe you did."

"Did he stand back out of my way upon being told to do so?"

"I don't think he did."

"Did you not consider that what he said to me, and the way in which he said it, were extremely insulting?"

"I fancy he thought you did not mind being insulted."

"My question is, did you not consider that what he said to me, and the way in which he said it, were extremely insulting?"

"Well, I don't know," — and he hesitated.

"Should you have thought such language insulting if used to yourself?"

"Nobody would ever use such language to me."

"I ask you again, should you consider such language, if addressed to yourself, insulting?"

"Yes, I suppose I should."

"Should you consider Mr. Straddles a very small man?"

"No; — he 's a good deal smaller than you, though."

"Should you have thought, before this affair occurred, that there was any very great difference between us in physical strength?"

"I never said there was a very great difference. I dare say Straddles would have had the best of it if he had had a fair start." Brooks's zeal for his friend told in a different way to what he intended.

"How did Mr. Straddles get home?"

"He rode home."

The doctor was examined, and stated that he had been called in to see Lieutenant Straddles, found him very badly bruised, and reported the case to Colonel Pringle; who, being also sworn as a witness, stated that he had, after hearing the doctor's report, made inquiries into the affair, the result of which was, that he sent the Adjutant to put both Mr. Stafford and Mr. Oakfield under arrest. This was the case for the prosecution. The court now adjourned for tiffin.

At half past two they met again, when the following witnesses were called for the defence.

Captain Colt was the first witness. After a few preliminary questions, he was asked, "Were you not the senior officer present at mess that evening?"

"I was."

"Did I not address you to this effect, — 'Captain Colt, I appeal to you, as senior officer present, whether I am to be thus insulted?'"

"I believe you said something of that kind."

"Did you make any answer?"

"No; I did not wish to interfere."

"Did I not address you a second time, saying, 'Captain Colt, you hear this and allow it?'"

"Yes, you said so; but I was n't going to make myself a third party in the quarrel."

"Did you not understand that I addressed you in your official capacity, as the senior officer present?"

"No; I don't think I understood anything of the sort."

O Colt, Colt! Oakfield was rather taken aback by this, and had to recall Perkins.

"Did you not hear me twice address Captain Colt?"

"Yes, we all heard you."

"Did you understand me to be addressing him in his private or official capacity?"

"Official, certainly."

"Was not that the general impression?"

"The universal one, I should think."

"When you came to my quarters and discussed with me the propriety of resenting the insult that had been offered to me, did you leave me, thinking that I was afraid to do so?"

"Well, I really am puzzled what to answer, for I was puzzled then; but on the whole, though Heaven knows what induced you to act as you did, yet I declare I thought then, and think still, that it was *not* because you were afraid."

"You think public opinion universally condemns my conduct in the matter of Mr. Stafford?"

"Yes, I think it does."

"And in the case of Mr. Straddles also?"

"No; I think several consider that you were quite right to thrash him. I know *I* do."

In the laugh that followed this concluding hearty announcement Perkins withdrew, and Lieutenant Taylor was recalled and examined on his former oath.

"Did Captain Colt ever report to you officially what passed, on the evening of the 20th of June, at the mess-table?"

"No, never."

"Considering that Captain Colt was the senior officer present at mess, and that I twice brought Mr. Stafford's language to his notice, might I not very naturally suppose either that he would interfere at the time, or else immediately report the matter through you to the commanding officer?"

"I think you might very naturally suppose so."

"Had you been the senior officer present, and I had made a similar appeal to you, should you not have interfered in my favor?"

"Undoubtedly I should."

Cross-examined by the court: "You said just now that you were present at the mess-table; did you hear the prisoner make this appeal to Captain Colt?"

"I heard him appeal to Captain Colt twice."

"Did you understand him to be appealing to Captain Colt to interfere officially, as the senior officer present?"

"Certainly I so understood him, and so did everybody else, I believe."

The last witness called was Mr. Middleton.

"Do you remember my coming to your house on the morning of the 21st of June?"

"Very well."

"Do you remember my making a statement to you of two occurrences, one of which had taken place the night before, the other that morning?"

"Yes."

"Did you not write down my statement at that time word for word, as I uttered it?"

"Yes, I did; and here is the paper."

The paper was handed in to the Judge Advocate, read aloud by him, and entered on the proceedings, the handwriting having been first sworn to. The next question was one which Oakfield put at Mr. Middleton's own earnest desire: —

"Assuming the facts as recorded in the paper just read to be correctly recorded, what is your opinion of my conduct?"

Oakfield colored as the question was put; the court and spectators looked curious.

Mr. Middleton, turning directly to the President, said slowly, "I consider your conduct to have been throughout not only correct, but admirable; nor do I think that any other behavior, under such circumstances, could have been equally characteristic of a brave and honorable man."

The prosecutor then asked, by way of cross-examination: —

"Do you think that such an opinion would be acquiesced in by the majority of the members of your service?"

"I hope so."

"That is no answer. I ask, do you think so?"

"I think it would be the opinion of all the really honorable men in my service."

Colonel Pringle looked immensely disgusted, and so the examination of witnesses was brought to a conclusion.

The court accordingly rose for the day, allowing Oakfield an interval of two days in which to prepare his written defence. The defence is always the most popular part of a trial, so that the room was crowded when the court reassembled, far more than it had been at the first day's sitting, and it was in the hearing of a large audience, less hostile perhaps than he himself supposed, that Oakfield read the following defence: —

"Mr. President and Gentlemen, — In making my defence, I shall, by your leave, bring to your notice the exact state of the facts as they have been proved to you; and then proceed to make a few more general remarks in vindication of my own conduct. I must premise a few words on subjects not directly connected with the case under trial, and therefore not referred to in the proceedings, but which, nevertheless, are necessary to a full understanding of it. I joined the 90th regiment in March, 1846, now about a year and a quarter ago. I gratefully acknowledge that I was, as Colonel Pringle has said, kindly received by the officers, nor

do I think that they had cause to complain of any coldness or discourtesy on my part. It is true, that from the first I never gave in to the common opinion, that all a man's leisure is at the service of anybody who chooses to intrude upon it, and perhaps lived more alone than was usual in junior officers, — more than was, perhaps, altogether pleasing to others. And it is also true, that my intimacy with a friend out of cantonments, and my studies in the native languages, prevented my mixing with my brother officers so much as I should otherwise have done. I could not but perceive, after some months, that I was not much liked in the regiment; and indeed one or two, to whom I hinted as much, candidly admitted the fact, and told me the reason of it. I thereupon tried, as much as in justice to myself, my own pursuits and intimacies, I had a right to try, to remove this impression by mixing more in the society of the regiment, and especially by being more frequently present at the mess-table. But I was often annoyed, and I think most of the officers who now hear me would have been annoyed also, at what appeared to me the unbecoming freedom with which the names of ladies, with some of whom I had the honor to be acquainted, were canvassed. I had not been accustomed to this; nor could any deference to regimental feeling induce me to be pleased with it. It was not my place to remonstrate, but I had a right to withdraw from what was disagreeable to me. Accordingly, I resumed very nearly my old habits of comparative seclusion, regretting the unpopularity which I knew would attend upon it, but considering that on the whole I was justified in pleasing myself. One effort I made, by a private and friendly remonstrance with one of the officers, but it was eminently unsuccessful; the gentleman in question was offended rather than conciliated; and what had fallen from me in private conversation got, by repetition, to be considered as an unauthorized public

rebuke; than which nothing could have been, I candidly admit, more impertinent, nor, I also affirm, further from my intentions. About this time, that is to say, about two months ago, Mr. Stafford rejoined the regiment. I had heard a good deal of this officer, to the effect that he was generally considered, as stated here by one of the witnesses, a quarrelsome man. I was not long in perceiving that he had conceived an unfavorable impression of me; he was, indeed, not very guarded in the way he showed this, but I was determined to quarrel, if possible, with no officer, — certainly not with a notoriously quarrelsome man. It would, I think, be generally admitted by my brother officers, that for some days I bore much that was irritating, and intended to irritate, with considerable control of temper. Mr. Stafford, observing that I was not disposed to quarrel, selected a point of attack where he knew, and I am glad he did me sufficient honor to know it, I should be susceptible. I shall not repeat the language he made use of on the evening of the 20th of June. Suffice it to say, that he spoke disrespectfully of a lady whom I have the honor to know. What followed has been amply detailed in the evidence. The paper, which was read by Mr. Middleton, contains, to the best of my belief, a most accurate account of what was said on both sides. I candidly admit that I was grossly and flagrantly insulted. I am charged with not having resented this insult. This charge must mean, that I, an officer, allowed the service to be affronted with impunity in my person. This I deny. I did what military duty strictly required; I referred the matter to the senior officer present, upon whom the responsibility of vindicating the honor of the service then rested. I charge him with having evaded this responsibility. Of the military offence, Captain Colt, and not I, is guilty. So far then, I contend, that, by the very facts established in evidence, I am entitled to an acquittal.

As an officer, I reported the matter to my superior: what he did or did not do, is nothing to me: my military duty in the matter ended there. But where my technical duty as an officer ended, my real and far harder duty as a man only commenced. I am prepared to vindicate my conduct on this head also: but, at the same time, I contend I am not bound, in order to procure an acquittal on this charge, to do so. What followed, after I had twice appealed to Captain Colt, was a matter of private, personal, moral conduct, with which military law, as military law now is, has nothing whatever to do. Till a court-martial takes cognizance of the immoral practices of intemperance, idleness, bad temper, and whatever else is most removed from their present jurisdiction, — till then, my conduct, after military law and etiquette were once satisfied, is strictly a matter not for their, but simply my consideration. But, as I have been tried, so will I make my defence, beyond what the letter of the law can require. I say, I am truly glad to have been able to act as I did. I am glad that, when I was grossly and gratuitously insulted, by a notoriously quarrelsome man, I took not the slightest notice of it. I will not go off to prove that I was right in not fighting. Although it has been often implied, during this trial, that duelling is an honorable, though an illegal practice, yet I shall not treat the court with such disrespect as to vindicate myself to it for not having done what, by the laws and regulations which it is here sworn to abide by, is declared to be an unmilitary practice, unbecoming an officer. I shall not raise a giant for the satisfaction of slaying it; I am not, I cannot be, charged with not fighting a duel; and therefore I am not called upon to express my contempt and detestation for a practice which is daily falling in the estimation of all except its natural and proper advocates, — fools and cowards. And yet it is hard to know, putting duelling out of the question, what this vague

term, 'resenting an insult,' really does mean. You were told by a competent witness that the regimental feeling recognized only one mode of 'resenting'; and you well know what that mode is. But I will waive this point also; I will leave the charge as it is, vague and undefined, and yet in unqualified terms deny it. I was *not* bound to resent the insult offered to me personally. Why not? Simply because — and this is the only answer an honest and independent man should condescend to give — because I felt myself that I was not. Why then should I resent it? Is my self-respect one whit diminished by being insulted by a practised insulter? If ten thousand Lieutenant Staffords call me a coward ten thousand times each, am I any the more for all that a coward? But if I let myself be called so, the world will think I am one really. Again, what then? What if they think me a coward? Still, if I am not one, I am not injured. Shall I lose my life in fuming and fretting and vaporing and resenting, that the world, which I know to contain an infinite majority of very foolish persons, may *think* me brave? or in trying to be brave? Please God I will choose the latter plan. I shall be asked whether, then, I will always let anybody insult me, and go through life the butt of every bully? One man asked me that in a practical and particular manner, and I answered it by flogging him. I now answer more generally, that I will resent where I am injured, and not where I only seem to others to be injured. What is an injury and what is not I will not attempt to define beforehand; still less will I accept another man's or another hundred million of men's definition ready made. I pay no allegiance, then, to the common opinion of men of honor, even admitting them to be really men of honor? — no, not if my own conscientious opinion is different. But if these 'men of honor' are merely the vulgar herd that follow each other's blind guidance, I say without

reserve, — no; no allegiance, but contempt simply! This is not the language of presumptuous self-confidence, but simply of honorable self-reliance. Such is my principle; would to God I could always act up to it! I repeat that I am glad and thankful that, in this particular case, I *did* in some measure act up to it. I have not denied his due to Cæsar; in military matters I have taken it upon me to yield account of my actions to military authorities; but neither will I render to Cæsar what I owe to God. I will not submit for decision to a military, or any human tribunal, matter which can be tried only in the soul's court of conscience. I repeat, that as to this matter of resenting the insult offered to me, my only defence can be, that I was right not to resent it; the wisest and the bravest and the best man cannot tell, but I only, what it was right for *me* then to do. The man did me no harm, was altogether incapable of doing me harm. What had I to resent? So much on the first charge. On the second, the facts are clear and simple. I fully admit having, as is stated in that charge, struck Lieutenant Straddles repeatedly with a riding-whip, and can only refer you to the evidence of what passed between us for my justification.

"I trust that the court will not think what I have said forward or presumptuous, unbecoming a junior officer; I believe, honestly, that I have said nothing unbecoming a man, however young, vindicating, as, if he is to call his life his own, he must vindicate, and that in terms the most decided and uncompromising, his own independence. Nobody in this court can have a greater dislike or horror of insubordination to military, or any lawful authority, than I have. I am sure my commanding officer, prosecutor though he be, will bear me witness that since I have been in his regiment he has had no cause to complain of the way in which I have discharged my regimental duty; insubordination to lawful authority is always a contemptible vice; but submission to

usurped and unlawful authority is a vice yet more contemptible; and no authority is more usurped and unlawful, none imposes a more degrading and ignominious yoke upon the slaves who yield to it, than Public Opinion, — which is the World, — which is enmity with the one centre of all authority, — God."

Such was Oakfield's defence; a startling innovation, it must be owned, upon that style of oratory recommended by precedent, but which was listened to with very considerable attention, though with the most various feelings, by all. Colonel Pringle listened with open disgust; the gray-haired pipeclay President with most serious and compassionate displeasure; Perkins with still increasing bewilderment; Brooks and Co. with contemptuous astonishment; some few members of the court with agreeable surprise, as a spirited relief to the monotony of the proceedings; perhaps Mr. Middleton alone with admiration and sympathy.

The court was immediately cleared, and when the throng got outside the criticisms burst forth, — "Well, what do you think of that for a defence?" "Back that fellow to preach against old Sawdust any day of the week." "Psalm-singing muff!" "Well, upon my soul, I don't think he 's a funk, after all." "Deuced rum chap, that 's all I know about it." "Safe to be smashed." "Bet you he gets off altogether." "Done." Such were the fragments of discourse that might have been heard among the enlightened denizens of the Ferozepore cantonment, as, first in a huddled mass, and then becoming small by degrees and beautifully less, they dwindled off to their respective tiffins.

CHAPTER XV.

"Then be my restless heart content,
Dull years are not all idly spent:
Give me one feeling true and deep,
One hour of self-forsaking,
And I will bear with years of sleep
For that one glimpse of waking."

ANONYMOUS.

We left Oakfield at Ferozepore, waiting in that hot July weather for the sentence of the court-martial; which sentence (it may be as well to say) is agreed upon in a cleared court, by the members, under an oath of secrecy, both as to their own and their neighbors' votes; as also the finding of guilty or not guilty is first voted upon individually, going upwards from the junior member; and afterwards the sentence is decided upon in a similar manner; the proceedings are then closed, and sent up to head-quarters for the approval, confirmation, or revision of the Commander-in-chief, and finally appear in printed general orders; so that the sentence of a court-martial assembled at a station some thousand miles from the head-quarters, especially if the proceedings are sent back once or twice for reconsideration or alteration, is sometimes not known for two or even three months from the time of the trial. Oakfield, however, had not much more than three weeks to wait. About the end of August it was known in Ferozepore that general orders had come, by the morning post, containing the two courts-martial.

Stafford was found guilty of sending a challenge to fight a duel, and sentenced to be degraded three steps in the list of Lieutenants of his regiment. Then followed, — "At the same court, on the 2d of August, 1847, Ensign E. Oakfield, of the 90th regiment of Native Light Infantry, was arraigned on the following charges: —

1. "For conduct highly unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, in suffering himself on the 20th of June, 1847, to be grossly and publicly insulted at the mess-table of his regiment, and neither reporting to his commanding officer, nor in any way noticing the affront."

2. "For highly unofficer-like conduct, in having, on the morning of the 21st of June, 1847, assaulted Lieutenant H. Straddles, of the 90th regiment, N. I., and struck him repeatedly with a riding-whip."

Finding, — "The court having carefully weighed and considered the evidence that has been brought before them, as well as what the prisoner has said in his defence, are of opinion that he, Ensign E. Oakfield, of the 90th regiment of Native Light Infantry, is,

"On the first charge, not guilty; and they do acquit him thereof.

"On the second charge, guilty."

Sentence: "The court having found the prisoner guilty to the extent above specified, do now sentence him to be severely reprimanded, in such a place and manner as his Excellency the Commander be now pleased to direct."

Recommendation by the court: "The court beg most respectfully to urge, in mitigation of the punishment due to the offence of which the prisoner has been most clearly convicted, and for which he has been sentenced by them according to the article of war, the very great provocation under which it was committed."

"Approved and confirmed."

Remarks by his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief: — "The Commander-in-chief, taking into consideration the recommendation of the court, and the extreme and gross provocation by which Ensign Oakfield was tempted to commit the unmilitary action of which he has been very properly convicted, merely desires that Ensign Oakfield will recollect for the future that personal violence is a mode of redress which neither civil nor military law can for a moment tolerate. On the first charge the court has acquitted the prisoner, and therefore the Commander-in-chief abstains from commenting upon his conduct; but he cannot refrain from expressing his strong disapprobation of the behavior of Captain Colt; and indeed, were it not for that officer's previous services in the field, the Commander-in-chief would have felt himself compelled to order him to be tried by court-martial for egregious neglect of duty. Ensign Oakfield will be released from arrest, and return to his duty."

So ended the Ferozepore court-martial; and the 90th were indignant. Stafford put down three steps (by which proceeding both Straddles and Brooks were gainers, by the by, so that they felt bound to express an extra amount of indignation to prove their disinterestedness), while Oakfield got off with a reprimand! Colonel Pringle talked seriously of leaving the army, if such things were to be done and tolerated in it; but he did *not* retire, and stops promotion even to this day. Even those most kindly inclined to Oakfield, such as Perkins, now that he got off so lightly, and was as it were up again, felt less indisposed to condemn him; whatever sneaking sympathy there might have been for him at the time of the trial was quite gone, or boldly transferred to Stafford, who, for his part, was comically divided between an affectation of regarding himself as a martyr to the cause of honor, and a great heartiness of damning Straddles for having got him into such a scrape, by which Straddles him-

self (the unkindest cut of all) came out a gainer. His friends, however, were stanch, — Mr. Middleton, Stanton, and Wykham, that is to say; for from his friends at home he resolved, now that the matter had so ended, to conceal the event altogether. Mrs. Oakfield suspected something, from a certain forced air and unusual vacancy in his letters, the sure consequence of a man's suppressing what his mind is full of, and writing upon other points which, for the time at least, he cannot feel much real interest in; but she would not ask what he apparently wished to conceal, and never knew what had happened till she heard it from Wykham, more than a year afterwards. She now, however, began to hear from Oakfield himself what distressed her more than the account of his court-martial troubles would have done, — that his health was failing; that his old delicacy of the lungs seemed to be allying itself with new symptons of liver ailment, — a combination so often fatal to the Anglo-Indian. Not that Oakfield either talked, or the least thought, of fatal symptoms; he was ill indeed, but not seriously; only the depression, which so often accompanies any affection of the liver, made him more sensible than he otherwise would have been to the unkindness of those about him. He never for an instant thought of retracting or qualifying his principles; he was only half ashamed of himself for so much regarding what he knew to be of so little importance. "But I fear," he said one day to Mr. Middleton, "that I am not cut out for a combatant; old Stanton now, were he in my position, with double my firmness, would evince a complete and unruffled composure, which would make even his opponents half laugh at their inability to disturb him."

"I don't think you have much to reproach yourself with on either head," said Mr. Middleton, knowing that Oakfield's language was that of sincere self-reproach, and that his answer was not, therefore, flattery, but a just consolation. "I

am sure you show no signs of being over-troubled by anything except by sickness, which you must get rid of; and I am equally sure that neither Stanton nor any of us could have fought the battle with more firmness and temper than you did."

"And yet," he said, "you will not suspect me of hunting for praise, when I say that sometimes I doubt whether I did not rather evade the true point at issue in raising that defence about Colt. I have no compassionate regrets for having lugged him into a scrape which he well deserved; but I am not sure that it would not have been a fairer answer, a more honest, unflinching testimony, to have taken my stand simply on an unqualified denial of the unholy command, 'Thou shalt resent evil.' Really, the almost literal opposition of the articles of war to the New Testament on this point is quite startling."

"The *literal* opposition, Oakfield; but you ought to be the last man in the world to allow yourself to be imposed upon by a mere literal coincidence. No, — I am sure that you took the right ground. That 'an officer shall resent an affront,' is not really inconsistent with the high moral precept, 'When a man smites thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also'; — depend upon it, it was a true instinctive consciousness of this that induced you to appeal to Colt, and afterwards to rest your defence upon that appeal."

"You mean," rejoined Oakfield, "that society is obliged to take, and therefore is justified in taking, a lower standard of morality than an individual."

"Even that I think is true, though you put it harshly. Society may rightly hang a man for murder, and that not for example, but for retribution. Why, then, may not one man slay a murderer in the same righteous spirit? I will not, indeed, say that he may not; I do not think it impossible that a good man, seeing one commit a hideous crime, may not even kill him in the holiness of his wrath, and stand

excused to his own conscience and to God himself. But I am sure that it would be madness for society to allow such a possibility; because, for one case where such homicide would be as just and dispassionate a retribution as a legal execution, there would be a million and more where it would be only an evil and malignant murder. Society cannot tell, cannot judge, and therefore cannot allow for motives. It can only prevent and punish consequences. In this way you must think of the unlimited evil consequences of allowing swaggering bullies to hector away unchecked. Far more, certainly, than in the case I supposed, a good man *may* bear it, endure it, and in the strong consciousness of rectitude be meekly silent; and yet society, military society especially, is not wrong, I think, in enjoining the resenting of affronts as a law; because, while it cannot detect the exceptional cases where submission is the result of strong self-government and high religious principle, it does know the strong torrent of bravado, tyranny, and insolence on the one hand, cringing baseness and cowardice on the other, which would pour down were the safeguard of this (frail I grant, and in principle defective, yet necessary) law withdrawn."

"I never heard you hold forth so vehemently before, said Oakfield, half admiringly, "except once."

Mr. Middleton laughed.

"Ah! you have not forgotten my Ganges sermon, but I have not done yet: it is true I am silent till I speak, and when I speak I fear I sometimes preach, and when I preach it may be that I prose, but that you must endure; however, to continue, — what is true, I think, of society altogether, that it is forced (not to take a lower standard of right and wrong but) to guard right and wrong, by laws lower in principle, and springing from a lower and less worthy ground, than those which originate in the high and only entirely true legislative court of conscience, is true also of military, as

compared with common, society. If the fountain of ordinary social law be necessarily low, that of military law is still lower. For armies themselves being anomalies, the necessary but still anomalous consequences of the world's having once degenerated from the high moral ground where alone the motive can be decided upon as coloring the act, it must needs follow that its laws should also be anomalous. As a mere arrangement for preserving the peace, nay, as a needful help to keeping up the artificial character which is considered (rightly or wrongly, — Oliver Cromwell, you know, thought wrongly, and created a regiment of ironsides, on strange revolutionary principles, by discarding the artificial in favor of the real sincere character), — but which I say is still considered best for keeping up the fighting qualities in soldiers, military law has, I think, a right to prescribe a certain code of manners, even as they, and as colleges, and other peculiar institutions, do a certain code of dress and habits, and even diet."

"But," suggested Oakfield, "surely a compulsory code of manners is a far greater infringement upon personal liberty than a code of dress or habits."

"Granted; but the excess of interference is not greater than the greater peculiarity of the military institution warrants."

"You cannot mean that a man is bound to submit to a code of manners which his own code of morals rejects."

"Of course not; but he should consider well whether he need reject it. Of course all this would be the vilest casuistry if I were attempting to set up any authority above a man's own conscience, which is, after all, the one final court of appeal, by whose sentence every decision of all minor jurisdictions must be confirmed, or utterly quashed; I only mean that there are things which, for social convenience' sake, we may lawfully submit to a lower tribunal; even as

you did when you brought Stafford's conduct to the notice of a superior officer, as we all do whenever we go to law; for this is the only answer I can find, and I think it is a conclusive answer to the Quaker doctrine of entire non-resistance; but when that lower tribunal requires of you some act, such as fighting a duel, or any much more trifling action, which represents itself to you as malignant, and therefore wrong, then, of course, you must go no further; you must say no, — the case is no longer before you; to the utmost of your jurisdiction I have obeyed, but now I am engaged with laws which you do not administer. In the same way that, in the case I just supposed, of a man's literally going to law, there may arise, at any time, circumstances which transfer his case from the sessions to the assizes, so it may at any time be his duty to transfer it himself from any human court to the higher jurisdiction of God and conscience; and if he still continues to prosecute his cause notwithstanding, in a court of human law, he is guilty of sin just as much as a man who, in obedience to the lower law of honor, fights a duel in opposition to the double command of two higher authorities, — social and moral law."

"I follow you," said Oakfield; "it is very good of you to find a theory to suit my practice, though it is rather putting the cart before the horse."

"No, I do not think it is; I am rather fond of theorizing myself, and reducing things to laws and principles, but I do not at all admit that a cut-and-dried theory is the horse which must, in every case, precede the cart of action. Our actions would be few, and poor, and hesitating, did we always wait to find a theory to fit them to."

"How should a man act, then, if not on principle? What security have you then for the actions?"

"On principle he must act; that is, he must have broad principles of right and wrong clearly established in his own

mind; a theorizer, in the bad sense of the word, is one who is always fidgeting to find out how his principle applies, and to what principle his act is to be referred, and so on, while a more healthy-minded man feels that he acts most truly when he acts on impulse; a good man may feel sure that his impulsive act, besides having a freshness and a vigor which no careful laborious squaring to a given principle beforehand can ever give, will also be far more correct; he may examine afterwards, and then find, with pleasure, that he can refer it, with great precision, to a theory. You will never fail to find a good theory to support a good practice; but reverse this order, and you will seldom be able to deduce a good practice from however good a theory."

This conversation took place during a morning ride; Oakfield had met Mr. Middleton, who had been out alone inspecting the new gaol which he was building; they had by this time reached the house, and found Miss Middleton, according to custom, seated in the verandah, with the teapot and the mangoes on the little table, waiting for her brother. They both dismounted. "Give me a cup of tea, directly, Fan; I have been preaching."

Miss Middleton looked at Oakfield as for confirmation of this remark; she knew how rare her brother's outpourings were.

"Yes, I assure you," Oakfield said, in answer to her look, "he has been talking more freely than I have heard him do for a year past."

"I consider myself defrauded, Henry; you had no business to be loquacious without me. Now the fit is over, and I suppose you will give me the benefit of your silence for another twelve months."

Oakfield remained to spend the day, as he now did many days; for he had little inducement to stay in cantonments, and his still failing health prevented those habits of regular

employment and active thought which could alone have made complete solitude endurable. Towards the end of August, however, he was so unwell that the doctor would not permit him to stand the trying month of September in the plains, and sent him to the hills, on medical certificate, till the 1st of January. He was, for some reasons, glad; for others, unwilling to go. He was glad to be relieved from his present unpleasant position, and yet would have dreaded any appearance of timidly retreating from it. He would be glad to see Wykham at Simla; but he had to part with the Middletons. He believed that his health required the change, and yet it was very trying to be going away on leave of absence, especially to one in his peculiar circumstances, just as there seemed a prospect of the regiment's being ordered on service. The disturbances which in April had seemed a mere local agitation at Mooltan, but had become serious there by the murder of two British officers, had, by procrastination and feeble tossing to and fro of responsibility, been fomented into something very like a general insurrection in the Punjab. Already a large force was in progress to Mooltan; already there was a rumor afloat, that an army was to be formed on the frontier, under the Commander-in-chief, and that there would be another Sikh campaign. However, Oakfield knew that he could at any time rejoin his corps, should it actually go on service, and that in the mean time two months, or even one month, in the hills would probably be of great use to him, setting him up for the whole cold season. Accordingly, on the 3d of September, he started for Simla. He had a troublesome journey, for the floods were out, and there are few things in this world more entirely irksome and disagreeable than travelling in a palanquin through a flooded country. The patient (such he surely is whether invalid or not) is jolted along dismally; the perpetual complaints of the bearers mingling with the

sound of the dripping rain and the moaning wind; the torch is blown out every three minutes, and so often has he to stop while it is relighted; his palki is not altogether water-tight; first he feels a suspicious drop on his up-looking face, wipes it away, but lo, another and another, and the gloomy truth is too manifest that there is a leak overhead, and erelong he finds his only comfort in resignation, and after vainly trying to protect first one part, then another, from the encroaching moisture, at last fairly gives in, and is soon lying in a cold trickling river; even this becomes bearable, by use, and as he is getting accustomed to it, perhaps even thinks of sleeping, notwithstanding the discordant sounds without and the watery couch within, he hears an extra yelling, feels a strange uplifting, has a painful consciousness that he is about to be let down, when he finds himself, palki and all, deposited upon the bearers' heads, and so passing through a broad rapid nullah, up to a man's chest in depth. In the middle of the stream, as he looks out upon the thick yellow rushing water, just where it gleams sullenly in the light of the torch, a man slips; the rest yell; the palki lurches; and his heart is in his mouth; for immersion in that boxed-up conveyance is certain drowning. The bearers, however, recover themselves, and presently the same screeching which had attended his being hoisted up proclaims that he is being let down, and again he jogs on, on his moist, monotonous, melancholy march. The long night passes away in occasional nullah passages and alternating glimpses of rest; the day breaks, and is gladly welcomed; but too soon the sun arises, shining with a pale sickly heat over the flooded plains, which begin visibly to exhale their feverish steam; the wet palki and its wet inmate are soon dried up, and then the sun begins to beat down with a sickening power. Seven o'clock! The bearers quicken their pace into a fast measured shuffle; their noisy talk degenerates into a methodical sing-song that

keeps time with their step; and by these signs the unhappy traveller knows that his rest is near. A group of trees is seen, and amongst them the small white bungalow. Happy that one moment of leaping satisfaction, after the long hours of discomfort. The palki is set down, its pale, dishevelled inmate hoists himself out, with his sun-baked, shrivelled garments hanging to him in uncomfortable wrinkles, and finds that he has, with thus much pain and grief, accomplished thirty miles of the two hundred and fifty which constitute his journey. However, hope gilds the future, and the elastic youth, forgetful of the immediate past, sets himself to find what comfort he can in the busy present, — scanty, it must be owned; rest and shelter he may find, but assuredly not comfort. Dâk bungalows have been described by some Oriental travellers as "the inns of India." Playful satirists! Who does not associate the word inn with his most cheerful hours, with evenings of intensest comfort, with meals of rarest conviviality? What English imagination does not, at the word inn, see visions of blazing fires, bright red curtains, dark mahogany tables, panelled wainscots, hospitable landladies, obliging waiters, amiable chambermaids, virtuous soles, tender beefsteaks, refreshing malt, deep-curtained beds, snow-white sheets, downy pillows, comfort on every side, cleanliness in every department, a pleasant evening over the paper, a good night's rest in a good four-poster, a cheerful waking the next morning at the friendly voice of Boots, to proceed by the mail, which is even now putting to in the yard, or to go down by the omnibus to the station for the early train! And these things are to be transferred to a dâk bungalow in India!! Passing over those differences which a different country and climate necessitate, such as the absence of fires and the substitution of native for European attendants, we still find little to justify the comparison. What did Oakfield see as he emerged from his palki?

A cold white bungalow, with all doors open, disclosing the two rooms which compose the house. He may occupy either of these rooms he likes ; nor need the privilege perplex him, for they are each the fac-simile of the other. He enters either, and finds four white walls, a very ricketty, dirty, roughly made table, two chairs to match, and in one corner a small square bedstead, dirty to a degree that makes even the table and chairs look clean; the pillows and bedding in his palki are soaked through with the last night's rain, so he must resign his body, taking the precaution to keep his clothes on, to the dingy pallet, and rest his aching head upon his coat. The obsequious waiter (shade of "Charles!") comes in, — the one long-robed, long-bearded, dark-visaged, beturbaned attendant, — and asks if breakfast shall be brought.

Of course it shall. These eighteen hours the man is fasting from all but muddy water. But no vain dialogue succeeds about what shall be provided; too well the unhappy traveller knows the nakedness of the land, and with a sigh of resignation, and one pitying glance towards the brood which he sees and hears frolicking in the compound,* orders the grilled fowl. The native attendant, as though agreeably surprised at receiving such an order, and proud of his ability to obey it, rushes out, and in a moment is seen enticing one out of that destined tribe. A shout, a cackle, a struggle, a triumphant exclamation, and the traveller has the satisfaction of knowing that his breakfast is secured. In the course of an hour it appears : the intermediate time has been profitably employed in doing battle with the countless flies, which descend upon this favored spot in myriads that forcibly recall the days of Pharaoh and afflicted Egypt.

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* *Compound*, — the small paddock-like enclosure in which a house is situated.

But the breakfast is come: two square feet of the unhappy table are covered with a dirty brown towel, which is "the government regulation table-cloth"; and on this is the appetizing meal. There lies, in all its leathery indigestible integrity, the deluded cock, that father of whole generations of dâk bungalow supplies, who only this morning, with unfearing crow, heralded in the day of his doom; a browner, more leathery substance, called a chapattie, supplies the place of bread; and in that vessel of undefinable metal floats a hot preparation of some unpronounceable leaf, which the caterer, in the same incorrigible spirit of stern humor, presents as tea. The breakfast is taken away, and now for "a day at an inn." The healthy man, with organs underanged, may sleep; the contemplative man may speculate upon the march of civilization in India as indicated by dâk bungalows, which, from the day of their institution, twelve years ago, until now, have remained, with no fear of innovating reform, with little or no change save that the furniture (the table, two chairs, and dirty bedstead aforesaid) were then only old, but now are crumbling to their last decay; the morbid man may marvel under what foolish star he was born, that he worried his friends out of their lives to procure him an appointment in the gorgeous East; the inquisitive man may read over, in the bungalow-book, the names of all the victims that have been there; the poet may add his mite to the stores of facetious and sentimental literature with which the Snooks and the Browns of this world have garnished this said book; but the sick man, — what shall he do except vainly wish it was evening, that he might be in his palki, and again struggling with the waters, and again wishing it were morning!

Such was Oakfield's journey in the pleasant month of September: it will hardly be wondered at, that when he reached Simla, and found himself at last landed in Wyk-

ham's rooms at the Pavilion, he was seriously unwell. He had, however, not been so ill but that he had been impressed with his first view of the Himalayas ; striking it always must be, — the thought that those great ranges which we see with our eyes are the very Himalaya mountains of which we were taught in our geography lessons as children, which have ever existed for us as a vague standard of immeasurable size. But as the traveller approaches for the first time that wonderful nucleus of the earth's anatomy, he requires no such strange reminiscences to stir his wonder : that first glance is one

> " That hath no need of a remoter charm,
> By thought supplied, or any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye " :

the dark huge mass giving to the mind an almost new idea of the meaning of size ; those endless ranges that rise up one behind another, growing dimmer and more dim in the vague distance, till suddenly up spring, hindmost of all, far the most distant of all, yet looking so near and distinct as to startle the eye that has been with difficulty tracing up the intermediate steps, those white and glistening peaks, which, with that tremendous outline traced in dazzling and perennial snow, seem indeed fit emblems of eternity, and defy the wondering mind to picture to itself a time when aught was and they were not. All day long Oakfield looked and marvelled as he approached the foot of the hills. It was one of those bright days after violent rain, when September feels almost as cold as January, and the sun *seems* at least to be powerless. All day long he travelled, — so cool was it, and all day long he gazed, and was not weary ; and when he got to his resting-place that night, immediately at the foot of the hills, he was glad to go to bed and rest, for he felt, as it were, overwhelmed, as a man who had stood all the day in a most awful presence. At daybreak he

started on a hired pony to ride up the hill. And now it must be confessed that his disappointment began. He looked for the characteristics of mountain scenery, and he found few or none. This is a disappointment which is felt by every one entering the Himalayas who has ever seen the Alps, or the Highlands, or the Welsh or English lakes. The mountains partook too much of the nature of the plains of India; the gigantic scale of everything did not at all compensate for that exquisite beauty of detail which Oakfield remembered in Cumberland. The crumbling, muddy rock was a poor substitute for the hard slate or granite; the wood lost much of its attraction by its appearance of jungly impenetrability; the monotonous outline defied any attempt at that individualizing personification which gave such a vitality to his recollection of every point and crag of his own mountains; and the one crowning defect of all, a defect so great that no beauty could have quite atoned for it, was the entire absence of water. Even in September, when the quantity of water was nearly at its maximum, it could be heard only, and not seen. There was an indistinct murmur in the ravine, and this was well, and he was less disappointed than he would have been by the dead, dry silence which reigns for so great a part of the year; but even now, as his eye followed the endless watercourses, it was rarely that he could detect the faintest twinkle of a stream, and this gave an unmeaning look, a listlessness to the whole landscape, which was almost painful. Let those who have been in a mountain country in Europe try to recall some of the scenes which they most admired, and try to conceive what those valleys would be if the streams, upon which their existence seems to depend, were wanting. The stream appears to make the valley, and with this natural consequence we are unconsciously pleased; but a valley without a stream is a wax figure; — dancing, without music; — Hamlet, without the Prince of Denmark.

But Oakfield felt little disposed to quarrel with this, or anything else, as he gradually mounted into the region of pure and cool atmosphere. He had left the foot of the hills at five o'clock in the morning; at that time the heat was still most oppressive; the night had been one of those hot, close, heavy burdens, so common in September; when he woke, the very dawn had no freshness in it; the thick, brooding air seemed as though it never could be lightened again. By six o'clock he had ascended two thousand feet, and was, by no other magic than the four legs of a stout hill-pony, transported into a region as different to that he had quitted as Damascus from Bagdad. The pale blue sky was clear and cloudless above him; below lay the plains, stretching as far as the horizon, one dank, hot fog-bank; the heavy, boiling wind was exchanged for light, fresh breezes, exhilarating almost to intoxication; the rays of the rising sun were welcomed for their now pleasing warmth; the hills were one mass of fresh, moist verdure. The pony trudged on with the sedate indifference of an animal who was used to the kind of thing; but Oakfield felt as if he were inhaling laughing-gas. He got that night to Hurreepore, and, by the help of a horse which Wykham sent down to Sairee to meet him, arrived at Simla in time for breakfast the next morning. Wykham was delighted to see him, and they passed all that day in the pleasing, exciting, yet most transient and unsubstantial conversation which is common to friends who meet after a certain length of absence. In the evening they rode round Jacko, and went to bed soon after dinner, as tired as if the whole day had been passed in violent exertion. Oakfield rose the next morning, feeling better in health and happier in mind than he had done for some weeks past. The first fact is easily accounted for, and may have had some share in producing the second, and yet it was not all. Attached as Oakfield was to the Middletons, he yet felt more

at home, more entirely at his ease, more able to bear and to do whatever might be before him, in Wykham's society than theirs. And yet this was strange, for with these he freely discussed all that had happened, while to Wykham he would never perhaps have uttered a syllable had it not been for a circumstance which, after he had been at Simla about a fortnight, drew him into a communication on the subject. He was riding behind Jacko,* in company with Wykham, according to evening custom, when they met a man riding alone, whom Oakfield instantly recognized as an officer belonging to one of the regiments at Ferozepore, who had been up at Simla ever since the middle of April. Wykham knew him, and spoke to him. Oakfield, as a matter of course, also addressed him, but the other affected not to hear, and passed on. The case was clear: he had heard of what had occurred at Ferozepore, had heard and believed the popular story, and come to the popular conclusion. Oakfield saw all this in an instant, colored violently, and rode on. Wykham had also seen what had passed, but was not so ready to account for it.

"I say, Oakfield, did n't you speak to that man?"

"O yes," said Oakfield, who had quite recovered his composure.

"Well?"

"Well,—and he cut me, Fred, that 's all. Nothing when you are used to it, I assure you."

Wykham now understood also, and regret and indignation kept him silent.

"Oakfield," he said, abruptly, "how do you expect all this to end?"

"All what?"

"O, you know what I mean; do you intend to be blackballed all your life?"

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* *Jacko*, the name of a celebrated hill at Simla.

"Possibly."

"My dear fellow, don't be so confoundedly cool; you can't like it, you know?"

"Not at all, I never said I did; I only say possibly it may be so, whether I like it or not."

"And shall you take no measures to stop it? My dear Ned, patience and endurance may be carried too far."

"No, they cannot, Wykham, not a jot too far, not half far enough. You speak impatiently when you say so; if I was like old Stanton, I should tell you that you did n't really think so."

Wykham laughed. "Yes, that is just one of the old bear's cool, self-complaisant assertions; but, Oakfield, I really don't know what to think about your principle of endurance. It 's all very well in theory, I dare say, but just look at the consequences."

"Well, Fred, even looking at the consequences, though I do not admit that it is at all necessary to do so, I see nothing very terrible in them."

"Not in being cut?"

"No; you do not cut me, nor Stanton, nor Middleton, nor some five or six more I could name; you don't suppose I am afflicted by that fellow who just passed cutting me?"

"Well, I thought you did care when I looked at your face."

"I was foolish to show it, and you are hard upon me to notice my infirmity. Of course human nature is liable to be irritated by rudeness when it is both intentional and sudden; but if we meet that man to-morrow night, you shall see me endure it with a wonderful serenity. Nonsense, Fred! you don't consider it a hardship really. I should like to see you putting yourself out of the way, or doing what you thought wrong, because all the fools of your acquaintance chose to cut you."

Wykham smiled, and there was a force and determination in his smile, as he mentally examined the picture Oakfield exhibited to him, which was strongly in confirmation of the latter's assertion.

"And yet," he said, "I should be inclined, I think, to do something to set myself right."

"Of course, so am I: I have an extra motive, not a very strong one I hope, but still a motive, to live well and shame the Devil. Ah! my dear Fred! it does shame me when I think how little we have to bear, and how ill we bear it. For just think," he continued, "how very little we do have to bear, we, in our rank of life; how seldom it is that we are called upon to suffer for conscience' sake. It is in this, I think, even more than in physical comforts, that we forget too much the fellowship of the poor with ourselves; expect too much of them, and claim far too great an exemption for ourselves. They are daily tempted by their own agonies, and those of their dearest relations, to the commission of crime, and we wonder that a sense of duty does not restrain them from offences so shocking as theft; but when we are tempted to commit a crime of equal guilt, though the cost of denying ourselves be no more than a displeasure against us, felt by those who have no power at all over us, then we think it a venial weakness if we fall, a miracle of virtue if we stand. I wonder what would become of us if we, with our softened natures, were suddenly exposed to the torrent of temptation that besets the poor. If all that God demands of me is that I shall resist the foolish dictates of a feeble, foolish society, I shall not think myself hardly tasked. We live in a soft age, Fred, when everything is made so plain for us, when it is so easy to go through life, assenting, with a shrug and a smile, to a thousand lies in a day; it is well when we get something to harden us, when we wake for a

little while to live for ourselves, relinquishing our lazy, faithless dependence upon others."

Wykham looked surprised; he and Oakfield seldom got beyond a playful tone in their conversation; and yet this always left upon them a sense of agreement and sympathy which made this deeper note, now that it was touched, sound — "not harsh, nor grating," though perhaps at first startling.

"Of course, Oakfield, I don't really expect you to give in to those fellows who differ with you, if you think it necessary to hold out; but do you?"

"Of course I do, and so do you, only you feel a friendly annoyance at seeing me subjected to impertinence, and so half advise me to do what you would justly despise me for if I did really, what you would scorn to do yourself. What do you mean by holding out? or rather, what would it be if I did not hold out? I must go, I suppose, and be guilty of some braggadocia, to prove I am not a coward, or apologize to man for having feared God; — let us hear no more of holding out or giving in."

"You speak pluckily, Ned, and have done pluckily too, and I have a secret satisfaction in your holding out; but do not you think on your own ground, as regards your duty to God and so on (this language was new to Wykham, and he used it rather awkwardly), that holding out may be little better than pride? Is it not right to respect, to a certain extent, the opinion of the world? It is all very well to talk of men being fools, but is it not a good deal for a man to assume that he is right and all the world wrong?"

"I did n't expect to hear such a commonplace from you, Fred; it is false though, as every commonplace more or less is. That is a favorite ruse of the Devil's, to adopt the parson's language, and call self-reliance pride, and the fear of man humility. There are, of course, cases where a man requires

to be cautioned not to set himself up against or above the world; when singularity, especially in indifferent matters, may be pride or vanity; but in morals, for one case where this caution is necessary, there are a thousand where it is worse than superfluous. I know that I do not require it, that my natural tendency is to swim with the stream; and I believe too that you require it a great deal more, that you have naturally far more firmness than I have, and therefore more need to be warned against obstinacy. It 's no good grinning, Fred, you know it 's true; but besides this, I protest against that clap-trap insinuation, that it is a good deal for a man to assume, and so on. I can't help it if it is; a man who is worth his salt must assume a good deal, or the world will drag him down to its own wretched level, while he is playing at mock modesty. The world is enmity with God; that is my ground, as you call it, though your ground too, just as much. Why should I make such a fuss about dissenting from that which is enmity with God? I wish *à priori* to dissent from it."

"You can hardly identify the society in which you and I move with the *world*, which the Bible speaks of in that way."

"Can't I! why not? the identical world; what world do you suppose *is* meant?"

"The world of wicked men."

"And is ours the world of good men? Ah! my dear Wykham, so we go on, passing on the application of the Bible from hand to hand, and all repudiating it, and saying that it is our neighbor's, not ours, till we reduce the Bible to a formal, stupid commonplace, and then are satisfied. I say the world does mean my society to me, and the poor man's society to the poor man. If I wait till the world of murderers and burglars molests me or tempts me, I shall wait for ever; and what is said about the world in the Bible, if

it means only that, is great humbug, — because perfectly useless to me; but if I regard the world of worldly men, the world of those who love mammon better than God, the world of drunkards, gamblers, spendthrifts, misers, gossipers, fools, as the world I have to steer clear of, then I see the application, and the extreme need of the Bible warnings, very plainly."

"But have you a right, according to your own view of things, to condemn others so largely?"

"Not till they are thrust upon me as patterns to follow, or as an authority to dread; then I do not condemn them; but I will not lie, by saying that they are good and wise whom I know to be bad and foolish; nor for the sake of a seeming worthless charity resign my independence. But, Wykham," he added, after a short interval, "why do you talk of *my* views, and *my* ground, as if they were not yours every bit as much?"

"I wish they were, old fellow; but I fancy they 'd be astonished in the regiment if you told them that Fred Wykham had set up for a religious man, and I won't play the hypocrite at any rate."

"I should like very much, Fred, if you will allow me, to know what your idea of a religious man is?"

"O, you know well enough; a man who goes to church, and reads the Bible, and does n't swear, and that sort of thing."

"Rather a queer jumble, is n't it, Fred?" asked Oakfield, good-humoredly; "but taking your definition, I should say you were a religious man; for I never hear you swear; I believe you go to church, and I dare say you read the Bible, — eh?"

"Yes, I do occasionally; but still I can't say I feel a religious man."

"Very likely not; for I don't the least accept your defi-

nition; it 's all very well not to swear, of course, but no more than may be said of some of the wickedest scoundrels on earth; going to church has n't much to do with the matter, I suspect, one way or the other; reading the Bible indeed is another thing, but it will no more make a man religious than reading a couple of pages of Bacon *per diem* will make him wise. A wise man will read Bacon and become wiser, and a good man will read the Bible and become better. A religious man, even though not a Christian (for recollect that your definition excluded all the non-Christian religious world), will probably be a Bible-reader, but it does not the least follow that a Bible-reader will be a religious man; indeed, we see that, practically, in nine cases out of ten, it does *not* follow. All read the Bible, — hardly any are religious."

"What do you call a religious man, then?"

"In two words, one who fears God, and loves God and man."

"That is rather vague, is it not?"

"No, not vague; comprehensive."

"But how is one to know whether a man fears God or not? There are so many ways in which men may live, all saying that they fear God."

"Assuredly, and who shall know, and who need know, except the man himself? What is it to you to establish to my satisfaction, that you fear God? Know it yourself, and you will find that enough. I and my neighbors shall find it out by and by, if it is necessary for you or us that we should do so."

"I wish I did know it," said Wykham, sadly.

"Ah, yes, my dear Fred! that is quite a different matter; but let me tell you this — Do you think I am coming the parson over you, Fred?" he said, abruptly.

"No, no, — go on."

"Well, then, — I am not such a treacherous fool as to tell you that you are very likely serving God, when you think yourself you are not. Not only do you know best, but you are the only one who knows anything at all about the matter; — but don't think yourself worse than you are; I was vexed and displeased with myself once because I thought I did n't come up to people's notions of a religious man, but I wish now not to come up to their idea, but my own; this is not lower than theirs, I hope; I am sure it is not easier, but it makes me freer, and so happier, and so, I think, more able to serve God. I was distressed that I could not like going to church, that I always found it dull, that I still hated sermons, that in many ways I could not bring myself to feel as I found so many good men saying they felt."

"Well, well," said Wykham, rather eagerly, "that is just my case, I know it 's very wrong."

"Why?" said Oakfield; "why admit it to be wrong? Why condemn yourself so hastily?"

Wykham looked surprised. "Of course," he said, "it must be wrong not to like being good and religious, and all that."

"Very wrong indeed, but let us be sure that we understand what good and religious are. Be free, Fred. It is a perilous thing for a man to emancipate himself, but he may dare to do it, if he lays on a thousand-fold extra precautions against license and self-indulgence. But I feel for you, Fred, for I have felt the same thing myself, and so, I am certain, do a great many of us; and I believe many of us go to the bad, in despair at not being able to accommodate ourselves to a given limited standard of the good, held up, not by our own conscience and experience, but those of others. Let us give ourselves a fair chance. While you do your duty, and do it not to man, but to God, do not distress your-

self because a certain religious method which other men have adopted, and been right to adopt, because it suited them, does not suit, and therefore cannot and need not, nay, should not, be adopted by you. Do not spend your energies in trying to like going to church and to enjoy sermons, but in trying to fear God; to think, to govern and restrain yourself."

They had reached their house, and went up to sit in the verandah till dinner-time. Wykham looked very serious: he was not accustomed to deliberate thought, (though often harassed by rufflings of mental activity which he had not felt the duty of encouraging.) and the process was of course hard and painful to him. He was fair and honest too as the day; this was one of those qualities which gave that hearty sunshine to his countenance, and made all love him, and he felt Oakfield's words pleasant, and distrusted them for that very reason.

"I am suspicious, Oakfield," he said, after a long silence, "of anything that offers to make good easy."

"God forbid that I should so lie as to make any such offer, I am glad indeed that you said that. I should have made mischief indeed, and babbled villanously, had you gone away with an impression that your friend advised a relaxation of self-government. All I ask is this, what are the temptations in life that most assail you? You are silent, but you know them, or can know them. It is fairer to speak for one's self than to force a confidence. I will tell you my experience; see if your own at all answers to it. I know that the things which make good so very hard to me are the lusts of the flesh, and a love of things seen and apparent, and a great carelessness about things unseen and real; that is, especially, God. I might name many more; but these will do. Now I believe that so far all young men are tempted alike, especially by those passions which destroy so many

of us. Now I say that religion to me consists, firstly, in subduing these passions, and learning to look upward as a man, not to follow my natural tendency and grow downward as a beast; this is not easy, Fred, believe me: the only ease I take, the only ease I recommend to you, is to reject whatever pokes itself between me and these great objects, either professing to be objects themselves, in which case they lie, or to be means by which I may attain my object; I will try the means; if they are good and helpful, well; I will use them, and thank God; if not, I will pass them by: if they still clamor that they are essential means, I will still say they lie, and disregard them; and further, I will claim for myself the sole right of saying whether or not they are a means and a help to me or not; and if they are not, I will not be persuaded to say they are, though they prove themselves to be so to every other single man in the world. In that extreme and impossible case, I should prefer owning myself to be a monster in nature, to telling a lie, and pretending to trust to a lie; as matters really are, there are very many, an increasing number every day, who are in the same boat; who begin to acknowledge that we must discern with our own eyes, and not our neighbors'; that such self-reliance is not presumptuous, because it is necessary; that listless dependence on others is presumptuous in the literal sense of the word, because it takes up unexamined, unearned, and claims as its own, what belongs only to those who thought it out in the first instance. A man *may* go over the same train of thought, and arrive at the same result; and in this way so many orthodox churchmen are also good and honest men; but he may just as fairly, and more naturally, arrive at much the same result by a different line of thought."

"Why more naturally? The natural thing is to follow the stream."

"The natural thing for the unthinking, listless, essentially

irreligious men, I grant you, but not for the thoughtful. Consider, if you and I have a problem to work out, we sit down, and if we both hit upon exactly the same line of reasoning, it would be thought a strange coincidence."

"I see, I see, — well, but now, Oakfield, the drift of all this?"

"That I advise you, my dear Fred, to do what I wish to do, to put honestly to yourself your object, viz. to overcome yourself, and to think of God and the unseen more than the world and the seen, and to work to this object with all your energies, to use such means as you know help you, not to distract yourself by pretending to find assistance in those which really do not. Above all, to think for yourself, and act upon your own thoughts."

"And defy your cutters," said Wykham, getting up, laughing and stretching himself, "and so we return with true logical method to our starting-point, and bring our rambling conversation back to the man who cut you behind Jacko. But, Oakfield! one question more before dinner. After all this, do you intend to go to church to-morrow?"

"Well," said Oakfield, laughing, but hesitating, "yes, but I won't say why, now; we 've had enough."

So saying he took his friend's arm, and they descended to the dining-room.

Wykham was unusually silent, for he was excited by hearing, for the first time, the language of emancipation disconnected from the licentiousness which his honest heart revolted from. A great fact, indeed, if it shall restore to their proper place those honorable impulses, that frank, instinctive virtue, which had hitherto felt half guilty for want of a rule to walk by. All these, then, it seems, are of God; gentlemanliness, honor, whatever good things commend themselves to me, these actually *are*, and I need not be afraid of Religion's ignoring them. My self-restraint, it appears, has been

religious, though I did not venture to call it so: I am better than I knew; this is encouraging, — but to conquer myself, — to live in and for the infinite rather than the finite; — ah! that is hard: the encouragement is not more than I need for such a task as that. Yet again I may strive to do this task in silence, in consoling incognito: the strife will be between God and myself; and though the world think me not religious, though my nearest friends know not what I am about, think perhaps that I am about idle things, yet my strife will go on none the less; and the fruits will be as genuine, though to all others invisible: God will know them, and I too.

Such was the sting that the conversation behind Jacko left in Wykham's breast; we shall not say it was a crisis in his life, — that he had been thoughtless, and now became thoughtful; but we say this, that that night he thought, that night he prayed, not as a form-bound slave, but as a hopeful child, and that "a freer and a wiser man he rose upon the morn."

CHAPTER XVI.

"But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment, to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw."

WORDSWORTH.

WHILE Oakfield was recruiting his health, still indifferent, at Simla, — while Herby was going through his work well and creditably at Winchester, enjoying, in something like their full extent, the great advantages of that ancient and glorious institution, — while the rest of the Oakfield family pursued their peaceful course, blessing and blessed, at Leatheburn, — while England, to take a wider range, was recovering her self-complacency after the Trafalgar Square outbreak of the 10th of April, 1848, so that the low moan of her suffering millions was for a time overpowered by the general rejoicing over the stability of her glorious institution, — while Europe was being deluged by the revolutionary, and, let us hope, fertilizing lava-stream that flowed from the unrestful Parisian crater, Anglo-India was becoming involved in her own troubles. It is a matter of history how the Punjab was settled after the Sutlej campaign; how, by the counsel of the then ruling influences in India, the native dynasty was permitted to survive under British control; how, in the

absence of those who had set this machinery in motion, the machinery itself was first involved in the working, then checked, then violently overturned; how local circumstances connected with Mooltan demanded the substitution of a new man for the popular Dewan Moolraj; how the two officers who were sent to superintend this petty revolution were foully and treacherously murdered; how the paltry retribution that was sought to be enacted for this villany was dribbled out into a more and more absorbing agitation; till, by a judicious tampering with an assassin, the Punjab was fomented into a revolt, and in the beginning of autumn it was found necessary again to assemble an army at the frontier; when at last the vigor, so long dormant, began to bestir itself, and a force better equipped, perhaps, than any that had yet taken the field in India, began from all quarters its march of concentration upon the northwest frontier, under the imposing title of the "Army of the Punjab." Early in October, Oakfield heard what he had long expected, that the 90th Light Infantry were ordered to form a part of the 3d Infantry Brigade. The army was to assemble, however, at Ferozepore, so that there was no immediate necessity for his going down. With Wykham it was different. His regiment (the 12th Cavalry it will be remembered) formed a part of the Mooltan force, which was already on its march: it was with deep regret that the two friends parted.

"Good by, Oakfield," said Wykham, "this has been a memorable time to me, this last two months; however, I sha'n't make a speech." Then in his old tone, "We shall meet again, soon, probably. There will be a regular row, you 'll see, and when we have knocked Moolraj on the head, we shall come up and join you. Stanton's troop is certain to be ordered up; so please Heaven, and the Sikh artillery, we shall all three meet again, erelong."

"Good by, Fred, God bless you," was all that Oakfield

could say. It was a great trial to him to lose his friend. At war with society, it may be imagined how he clung to those who loved him, and he found more help and satisfaction from Wykham's society than any body's else in the world. There was a strength in the latter which always made itself felt. Oakfield's more cultivated mind and (although rather the younger of the two) his far greater experience had, of course, much more to communicate, but his naturally softer, perhaps too speculative nature, had much to learn from the instinctive rectitude and ready vigor of his friend. "If Wykham has right and wrong clearly before him," Oakfield once wrote to Middleton, "he will go straight *to* the one and *from* the other, without let or hesitation; apparently, though of course not really, without difficulty. If Wykham ever becomes, as he will become after his first sorrow, a thoughtful man, he will be one of the toughest enemies the Devil will have had for a long time."

Meanwhile, he remained in the hills till the 20th of October, and then, after about a month and a half's sojourn in the wonderful climate of the Himalayas, a sojourn which, though so short, had yet greatly improved his health, commenced his journey back to Ferozepore, very different from his troublesome trip in September. It was now the latter part of October, the rain had ceased for some weeks, the streams had run themselves out, the earth still retained, though too soon to lose, the fresh verdure which the rains had created, and all nature seemed in sympathy with the European population, who sprang up, as it were with the delight of released prisoners, to hail the first fresh breezes of the incipient cold season. But fresh and beautiful as that October month was, it was the herald of a cold season different enough from the ordinary times of Christmas enjoyment. Already the whole Northwest was stirred by the approach of war, not war as it once was in India; all testimony agrees

as to the changed and far sterner character of Indian warfare since the Mahratta enemies were exchanged for Sikhs. The struggles of the Sutlej, the fearful night at Ferozeshah, where, if ever, the Indian empire was indeed in jeopardy, were still remembered; and although it were a base libel to say that these, or any, recollections dimmed the expectation, or lowered the sanguine courage, of those who were now again called upon to complete the discomfiture of the same obstinate enemies, yet it is true that, to thoughtful minds, war in India is a far more serious thing than it used to be; a game which, ever since that great turning-point in Indian history, that "beginning of the end," the war in Affghanistan, has been at once more expensive and more hazardous.

Oakfield found things not much changed in his regiment, but what change there was, for the better. The bustle of public affairs gave that excitement the desire for which is the cause of half the private quarrels, jealousies, and persecutions that go on. There was still a dislike felt towards him, and he was generally avoided, but the dislike was now passive, and his principles of toleration were not tried by marked insolence. Perkins was the only officer that spoke to him, and he but seldom and unwillingly, for Perkins was not disposed to espouse Oakfield's cause against the regiment; Stafford, Brooks, and Straddles industriously fomented the ill-feeling; the rest listlessly acquiesced in it. One or two officers of Horse Artillery, who had known Oakfield from the day he joined, and who (although they expressed surprise and regret at his method of treating Stafford, whom they detested) had nevertheless, throughout, felt a consistent and reasonable belief, that, however much Oakfield might differ from them, it was impossible that a courteous, gentlemanly, strong-minded man, as they knew him to be, should be a coward, and in this belief had throughout evinced an honorable superiority to the contemptible fear of public opin-

ion, being aggrieved at the coldness with which Oakfield was everywhere regarded, and touched by the patience and dignity with which he bore it, advised him to apply for an exchange: but when Oakfield firmly declined, in a way that showed it would be useless to repeat the suggestion, and pointed out how inconsistent any appearance of retreat from the ground he had taken would be with that profession of rightful confidence which he had all along maintained, they were silent, and by their silence assented to the justice of what was said. But, indeed, Oakfield had not much cause to regret an exclusion which he hardly felt; had a triumphal procession been prepared for him in cantonments, he would not have benefited, for there was a double attraction for him now at the civil lines. Stanton's troop, as Wykham had anticipated, was ordered to the frontier, and Stanton himself, in anticipation of its arrival, had come on to stay with the Middletons at Ferozepore. The troop had arrived, and been detained at Ferozepore some short time, when Oakfield returned, and the latter, though slow to observe such things, could not but think that his friend was differently impressed with Miss Middleton from what he himself had been. Nor was he surprised at this; his only cause of surprise was that he himself had been so comparatively unimpressed; yet, as he observed and questioned himself with that merciless candor which had now become habitual to him, he seemed to perceive how far more congenial to Miss Middleton's impetuous though affectionate temper, to her flashing wit and ambitious though perfectly feminine nature, must be the calm force, the unruffled, caustic strength of Stanton, than his own painful, anxious, darkling search after truth. But however this might be, Oakfield saw with sincere joy the genial influence which Miss Middleton's society exercised over Stanton's heart, so strong and warm for all his short and somewhat crabbed manner; and could have smiled at the

unconscious acknowledgment which Miss Middleton made, by her subdued, inquiring tone, to the magnetic force of his friend's character. It was a sad day when that party at Ferozepore was broken up. Mr. Middleton, of course, remained at his post alone; for he was glad to take this opportunity of sending down his sister to pay a long-promised visit to a friend at Allahabad; she was loath to go, but perceiving in her brother's playful assurance that women were an encumbrance when bustling work was in prospect, an indication of his real wish, not only for her safety, but to be himself unfettered, consented. We will pass over a busy week of preparation, the gradual assembly of the advanced portion of the army, and the unopposed passage of the Sutlej, that great river, which had been the extreme point of the previous campaign operations, forming the base on which, on the present occasion, they were commenced, and take up our story at the time when, on the evening of the 22d of November, 1848, the British army was encamped at Ramnuggur, all regretting the inauspicious opening of the campaign which they had witnessed that morning, when, in a fruitless cavalry skirmish, the lives of many brave men, and more than one distinguished officer, had been sacrificed, with absolutely no result. The army, after this unfortunate affair, halted at Ramnuggur, on the left bank of the Chenab, fronting the enemy, who were strongly intrenched upon the opposite side of the river, waiting for the heavy guns which were in the rear. These joined the army on the 29th. On the 30th it was known in camp that a force was to be detached under Sir J. Thackwell to turn the left flank of the enemy. Oakfield was spending the day as usual in Stanton's tent when the intelligence that his regiment was ordered to march reached him. He hastened home, home being the ground occupied by his own corps, and by his own tent, *par excellence*, and at midnight the detached force began its

march. It was a calm, but very cold night; Oakfield rode along silently, wrapped in his cloak, amply engaged in looking at the stars, and with his own reflections. He had been greatly struck, during the few weeks of his experience, by the difference between an army in cantonments and an army in the field, and the vast superiority of the latter; and he came to the conclusion, that the cause of this superiority consisted principally in the fact, that an army in the field was at work, that work involved seriousness, that seriousness to a certain extent induced reflection, and that reflection in some degree dissolved the wretched tie of a wretched public opinion, and called forth something of individual character and independent action; that although the individual character so brought to light might be, and most probably in most instances was, weak and bad, yet the character of few or none was, individually, so bad as that most wretched and contemptible aggregate of weakness and evil which at other times asserted its coarse domination. He was struck, and half amused, at the manner in which this nascent independence evinced itself in his own case, how greatly the bitterness subsided, now that men ventured to think and act a little for themselves; the majority, hitherto passive imitators, followed their own bent, and returned, not indeed to anything like intimacy or cordiality, for that had never existed, but to commonly civil intercourse; while those only who, like Stafford and Straddles, entertained a real feeling of active animosity, kept up a sullen silence. Ought Oakfield to have allowed this arbitrary return to intercourse after so many weeks of equally arbitrary excommunication? Ought he to have required some apology, some explanation of the treatment he had met with? He thought not. He perfectly understood the cause of the excommunication, he appreciated and allowed for the weakness, the timid following of others, which had made it general; he understood, also, and felt

willing to help forward rather than thwart, the good influences which now led to a change. "Besides," he thought, "if I professed to think so lightly of the ban of exclusion, nay, let me do myself justice, if I *did* think lightly of it, why should I pretend to make a fuss about its removal? I have not conceded an inch of the cause I took up; that is enough for me. I need not busy myself about my personal dignity; that will take care of itself, I dare say. 'What we owe to ourselves,' — O much-abused phrase! I fancy we owe a good deal less than we pay in that quarter; a very large credit balance there, I imagine, with most of us."

So Oakfield evinced no surprise when first one officer, then another, asked him to drink beer * at mess, as a kind of tacit suspension of hostilities; and although Stafford and Co. were loud in their condemnation of such meanness, such want of self-respect, &c., yet the majority felt, and some acknowledged, that this was of a piece with the rest of Oakfield's conduct, and they accepted his being so open to conciliation now, when it would have been so easy to hold out and turn sulky, as a part proof of his having been consistent and sincere throughout. In fact, the impression which had obtained for a time during his trial, but which had given way to standing prejudices, began to revive; viz. that Oakfield was a queer sort of fellow, who took his own view of things, and did not care what other people thought of him. "And yet," said Perkins, who had distinguished himself in the Sutlej campaign on one occasion, "I shall be glad to see how he carries himself in action." Perhaps this thought had occurred to Oakfield too.

It was long and weary that night march: the column moved slowly up the left bank of the river, and it was not

* Equivalent to the English custom of drinking wine with a person.

till sunset the next evening (1st December) that Sir J. Thackwell, being then at Wuzzeerabad, thought proper to cross the river. That night also was long and anxious. The column had marched more than twenty miles that day; all were cold, hungry, weary; the night, too, was dark as pitch, but it was necessary to cross at once, and the passage was immediately begun. The hours passed on that night, and still in long succession the Artillery, with their guns and horses, were being transported across. The morning broke without any interruption from the enemy during this anxious operation, and at about noon on the 2d of December the column recommenced its march, now down the right bank of the Chenab, upon the left flank of the enemy, being separated by the river from the main body and the Commander-in-chief. They marched all day, and halted at sunset. That night Oakfield had his first experience of campaigning hardships; the column marching light, had left all equipage and creature comforts behind them, and that cold night was passed upon the hard ground. The contemplative man was pleased at this, the first fruits of privation, and at the universal cheerfulness with which it was borne. At dawn on the 3d, the column pursued its march with the prospect of being engaged shortly with the enemy. The Commander-in-chief's guns were heard all the morning, as he attracted the attention of the Sikhs in front. At one o'clock there was a halt to rest and water the horses; this had scarcely been accomplished, when the galloping in of the advanced pickets, and the opening of the enemy's artillery, gave intimation of his advance. The engagement of Sadoolapoor was of that unsatisfactory nature, a victory useless because not used.

That night the British column, wearied and disappointed with the result of the combat, lay down at their arms to guess at the events of the coming day.

Not so the enemy. All night he was engaged in removing his shattered guns, and effecting a swift and silent retreat.

The Commander-in-chief being apprised of the retreat of the whole Sikh force, immediately sent two regiments of European cavalry in pursuit, under that great pursuing officer, Sir W. Gilbert; and the whole British army crossed the Chenab.

Then followed an anxious and a vacant month; while the enemy remained secure in his jungle retreat about Mooney and Russool, daily adding to the difficulties and defensive properties of the ground he had selected, the British army remained in comparative inactivity, with the exception of almost daily reconnoissances and counter-projects to defeat the cunning and activity of the enemy in escheating their camels.

So the two enemies lay, looking at each other, the Sikhs awaiting the arrival of Chutter Singh, when he should have reduced Attok, the British looking out for the army which was to reinforce them upon the downfall of Mooltan; but though there was thus little stirring in the way of actual warfare, yet an army on the *qui vive* in presence of the enemy is seldom dull. Constant rumors created an unfading interest for those who live upon such things; the stroll about camp in the morning, the repetition of it in the evening, hearing upon each occasion new anecdotes, new reports, new prophecies, new croakings; the social parties at mess in the evening, when each regiment was drawn together by a bond of fellowship different enough from the slack one that had held them in cantonments; all this, together with such books as could be mustered, to be passed from hand to hand; above all, the consciousness that, whatever might have been said in the Sadoolapoor despatch, the real work of the campaign was still to come, — helped out those short December and January days quickly, and not unpleasantly.

To Oakfield the life was all agreeable, for it was new, and besides this, to a contemplative admirer of Carlyle, the self-possessed energy, the silent intention to attain its point and do its work, in short, the genuineness of an army in the field, was an engaging spectacle. He passed much of his time with Stanton and amongst the Artillery officers, and made other acquaintance also in camp, one especially, an old chum of Stanton, Jenkyns, now on the Commander-in-chief's staff, a great authority in the midst of the thousand and one rumors that day by day were born, flourished, subsided, and died. His old friends, too, the 81st, were in camp, and he found them quite ready to forget all differences; all except Cade, who was an intimate friend of Stafford's, and fraternized with him most determinedly. But the others remembered Oakfield principally in connection with Vernon, and his kindness and friendship to their brother officer had left an impression on them all, while other things were forgotten.

In fact, Oakfield found himself, after his long solitude, being strangely forced into social habits, and although he still sought in vain, and still regretted the absence of that moral earnestness which should give its character to war as to everything else, yet he was willing to accept, as a far better substitute for this than any he had yet found, the physical earnestness (if the expression may be allowed) which did certainly animate and elevate, far above their ordinary level, those around him. He dined generally at his own mess, always indeed except when he was with Stanton, at whose tent on the 11th of January he had been spending most of the day. They were walking up and down the long street in the evening, talking as usual about the campaign, when they saw Jenkyns.

"Well, Jenkyns, any news?"

"Nothing *pucka** that I know of, — you have heard the report, I suppose?"

"No: what report?"

"Why, that Attok has fallen; but I fancy it 's only a native rumor; at least, I know the Chief has n't heard anything of it. I must be off, though, I 'm going to dine with the Adjutant-General."

"Humph," said Stanton, "if that 's a true bill, we sha'n't be here long."

"Why not?"

"Why not, — because, O sagest Bachelor of Arts, with 40,000 men in our front, it were inexpedient to await the arrival of Lord knows how many thousand more, — we shall have an action, you 'll see, within a week, if this is anything more than a *banau*." †

"How many times have you been in action, Stanton?"

"Let me see, — Moodkee, Ferozeshah, Aliwal, Sobraon, that 's four, and Ramnuggur, and Sadoolapoor the other day, six, — and I never once got hit yet."

"Beware of Nemesis," said Oakfield, laughing.

"Well, what are you looking so solemn about?" asked Stanton, after a pause.

"Why," said Oakfield hesitatingly, "I feel rather anxious as to the truth of this rumor" (Stanton stared); "because," he added, "though I know that in my affair at Ferozepore I asserted the truth, yet I know also that it was only half the truth; it is not necessary, I am aware, that I should have an opportunity of asserting the other half, but if it should occur, you must perceive how great a relief it will be."

"Explain," said Stanton.

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* *Pucka*, literally, ripe, mature; hence used in a great variety of metaphorical senses in the Anglo-Hindustanee dialect.

† *Banau*, a make-up, a falsehood.

"You understand me, I am certain, but you always take a pleasure in making one express in terms what one would rather imply; you often remind me of Middleton in that."

"Oakfield," interrupted Stanton.

"Well?"

"Don't shirk, but explain."

"You are a bully, Stanton, as Wykham always says, and we are very weak to submit to you; but what I mean is this, and you know it: having asserted the superior claim of moral courage, it is a great boon to be able to assert the inferior, but still essential, importance of physical courage. Now do you see?"

"I begin to have a glimmering."

"Old mole! well, you see it will be a satisfaction to be able to show those fellows in action, that I am physically as little afraid of cannon and muskets as they are."

"Very true, Oakfield: and I have often thought and wished the same on your account. Do you feel confident in yourself, however, in this latter respect?"

Oakfield colored violently: "I hardly thought that you suspected me, Stanton."

"My dear boy, pardon me; I would n't have hurt you for the world; you have had enough, Heaven knows, without your friends, as you say, suspecting you. I don't suspect you, my dear fellow, one half as much as I do myself: that is, as to the existence of every true and noble intention; but what I mean is this, asserting a principle is a very different thing — I don't say easier, I dare say it is far harder, but still it *is* very different — from feeling at home under a hot fire. Brave men have often half winced under their first experiment, and our next engagement will be all but your first; for you know you Infantry people had nothing to do the other day at Sadoolapoor."

"I understand," said Oakfield, in a kind tone, "and I beg

your pardon for having for an instant misunderstood you. It *is* a very different thing, I grant you, and quite new and untried to me, and so, as he that putteth his armor on may not boast as he that putteth it off, I will not vaunt myself a hero. Nor do I think myself a hero; that is, one of those people who are very sanguinely indifferent to, apparently almost unconscious of, danger; I dare say I shall half wince, as you say, in my inmost heart, when I first find myself under fire: the only thing I venture to assert confidently is that this wincing shall not overpower me. I say I shall not be afraid, as confidently as I say I shall not lie or steal."

"There is a great difference, Oakfield: one is often purely constitutional. Many men, who not only do not lie or steal, but are really good men, are positively unable to subdue personal fear."

"That I deny *in toto*."

"My dear fellow, you have never tried."

"That *argumentum ad hominem* is never a particularly courteous, and very seldom a sound, one. If we only affirm or deny within the bounds of our own experience, we are somewhat limited, I think. I still deny *in toto* the proposition 'that good men are unable to subdue physical fear,' as treason to God and the soul."

"You speak warmly, Oakfield."

"I do, Stanton."

"But, to drop the appeal to experience, since that offends you —"

"Only when it would set itself up against eternal principles, in comparison with which its testimony is not worth a rush."

"Well, well, I say, dropping that, you are carried away rather when you say that a good man is necessarily free from physical fear."

"I do not say so; I merely say he may overcome it as

surely as any other temptation; of course there are different degrees of courage and fear implanted in men constitutionally, as there are of beauty, of strength, of intellect; and he who has much courage constitutionally is far happier than he who has little; yet he must not boast of that which he has only received; and the man of great constitutional timidity is not one whit worse, though far less fortunate, not one whit more contemptible, though far more to be pitied, than the man of great constitutional courage."

"A timid man no worse than a brave man, Oakfield? A little paradoxical, my dear boy."

"No; not *worse* in any other sense than an ugly is worse than a handsome, a stupid than a clever man: that is to say, no worse morally, but more unfortunate."

"A man who takes a gun," said Stanton, pursuing his *reductio ad absurdum*, "no better than he who runs away! Well, I dissent to that theory; at least I shall take the liberty of preferring one to the other next week."

"You are less fair than usual, Stanton."

"Because you are more than ever paradoxical. I tell you it is the fault of your mind; you always seem to delight in dissenting from those things which are most universally acknowledged."

"Because in morals the things most universally acknowledged are seldom without a great alloy of falsehood; and in no one more than this of courage; at any rate, Stanton, hear this: you say a man who runs away is worse than a man who takes a gun; infinitely worse; as much worse as the man who speaks the truth is than one who tells a lie. Yet it would be hard to say that a man of a reserved, cautious temperament, who yet always spoke the truth, was worse than a naturally frank and out-spoken man. Again, I grant you that the latter is far more happily constituted, inasmuch as he is far less than the former tempted to the

sin of lying; but I will not be so grossly unjust as to condemn the man who, under far greater disadvantages, speaks the truth; I will rather esteem him the better of the two, as having done the hardest thing; in the same way, a clever man is far more fortunate than a very dull one; but I will respect the dull, but industrious worker, who, by cultivation, attains to his ultimate possible of intelligence, more than that other who is content with admiring the gifts which he has received from nature, and has done nothing for himself."

"Where are you getting to, Oakfield?"

"To the point; — so a constitutionally timid man, who lets his timidity conquer him, is guilty of sin, as every man is who gives way to his besetting temptation, whatever it is; but the timid man who does his duty — that is, in our case, who fights well — is not worse, but rather better, than the careless fire-eater who, at little or no sacrifice, does likewise. Cowardice consists not in being naturally afraid, but in not overcoming the natural fear: natural fear is a defect which a man cannot help; for which, therefore, he may not, without injustice, be blamed; but it is the work of all our lives to overcome our defects, and he who does not, but is overcome by them, is the sinner, coward, liar, or whatever the natural defect may be to which he has yielded. Fancy if people were to talk of 'a man who cannot get over his murderous propensities'!"

"You admit, then, that cowardice is a thing for which a man may be blamed, despised, and punished."

"Do I admit that a liar may be blamed, and despised, and punished? You might as well ask me that. Falsehood is cowardice, — cowardice is falsehood; though I think the world is often cruelly unjust in its punishment of it."

"I thought so," said Stanton, smiling.

"For," continued Oakfield, without noticing the interruption, "it punishes cowardice, *not* because it is sin, but be-

cause it is inconvenient. If it punished it on high grounds, the coward would not be more severely punished than the adulterer; the man conquered by his fear, than the man conquered by his lust. This is one injustice. Another is that men do not (though this is more pardonable, for in a great degree they cannot) allow for the different force of temptation in different cases; but certainly society is unjust and wicked in punishing cowardice, as if it were, I may almost say, the only sin."

"There are few, or none, so bad."

"Granted; but there *are* some: and many, but a few degrees better, which are not punished at all."

"But how is it, Oakfield, that you are always putting yourself in the position of advocate for the defendant? You talk now as if you were pleading in mitigation of cowardice; and so always you seem uneasy till you have found some ground of dissent from public opinion; and yet I believe, in ordinary matters of right and wrong, such as falsehood and truth, cowardice and courage (where you must excuse my saying refinement is rather superfluous, and the instinct of the honorable mind is the most conclusive argument), public opinion is oftener correct than not."

"Perhaps," said Oakfield, with a gentle concession that touched Stanton acutely, "you are so far right that I may have an unhealthy desire for singularity, and yet, Stanton, I do believe, indeed, that God's truth and man's opinion are, as a general rule, so diverse, that he who would seek to live by the former, must needs dissent for the most part from the latter. But good night, old fellow, we have been both rubbing our rough edges against the other a little more than usual, a good deal more than I like; but if we are engaged soon, I trust you will find that, theorist as you think me, my practical conclusion is much the same as yours."

"I know it, I know it," said Stanton, and he shook his

friend's hand far more warmly than was the wont of his undemonstrative nature, for he was conscious that his tone in the preceding conversation had been scarcely altogether kind.

"That man's temper," he said to himself as he walked towards the mess tent, "gets better and sweeter every day, and I am a rough, cantankerous Turk to try him so; and yet his eternal dissent *does* provoke me; I believe if I asserted as an universally admitted fact, that good was better than evil, he would fidget about till he could find out some ground of opposition or qualification to take up. I hope to God his theories will not unman him in action, that he will not be musing and refining when he should be leading the Jacks;* but," he concluded abruptly, "I don't fear that."

Meanwhile Oakfield wended his way back to his part of the camp.

"Stanton will not see," such was his half-uttered soliloquy, "how far I agree with him; but surely God's bidding is a nobler motive to bravery than man's;—I doubt whether a sense of honor ever kept men up to the mark better than the fear of God and the greatest indifference to man did David, and Deborah, and Zwingle, and Oliver Cromwell and his Ironsides. God knows I feel no rash self-confidence just at this moment, and yet," looking up at the stars, "he knows that I do feel it very impossible that the fear of a musket-ball should turn me from what I do heartily acknowledge to be my duty to him."

"Halloa! Oakfield," cried Perkins, as he entered the mess tent, where they were already seated for dinner; "don't look down in the mouth, man; Attok taken, Chutter Singh *dauring*† down like the devil,—march to-morrow, knock the Sikhs into the middle of next week the day after;

* A popular name in the army for Sepoys.

† To *daur*, to rush or hurry.

ah! that 's it, old fellow; by Jove, we shall all be C. B.'s in a fortnight."

It was reported the next morning that an express had come in from Mackeson, the political agent with the Governor-General, and soon after it was known that the rumor of the preceding day was true, that Attok had surrendered, and that Chutter Singh was in full march to reinforce his son. It required no great military science or experience to see the necessity of attacking the enemy at once, before his numbers, already excessive, were so formidably increased; and nobody was surprised when the orders appeared in the afternoon, for the whole force to move at daybreak on the following morning. Oakfield met Stanton in the course of the evening; both felt that their last interview had been a little less friendly than usual, and were glad to meet again before separated by the active duties of the next day.

"Well, Oakfield! you see I was right; you 'll smell powder enough before the next few days are over; this time the day after to-morrow, Ned, and I dare say you will have seen your first, and I my sixth, general action; perhaps one or both of us will have solved all problems; eh, old boy!"

They talked for some time in their old friendly style, carefully avoiding all subjects on which they were likely to disagree. They recalled their overland voyage, spoke each of his own antecedents in England, of Hajeepoor and Arthur Vernon, of Wykham and the Middletons, on which last subject Stanton, under the influence of the moment, approached as near to tenderness as his reserve would allow him to do to a third party; and, with a few remarks as to the next day's march, parted. Oakfield dined at the mess as usual; the camp resounded with the bustle of preparation till about ten o'clock at night, from which time till daybreak the profoundest silence prevailed.

At daybreak on the 12th, the whole army accordingly

moved to Dhingee, within a few miles of the enemy's position. The orders of the night detailed the position of regiments, &c., for the battle of the next day. Perhaps from the well-known strength of the enemy's position, and the numbers and courage of Shere Singh's troops, a scarcely less bloody combat than that which actually ensued was anticipated by all former opponents of the Sikhs; many hands were shaken that night, and many an honest, fervent wish for the safety of friends on the coming day fell from lips which, before another sun had set, were cold and fixed in death.

Although Oakfield's health was greatly improved, he still retained that painful invalid symptom, restlessness at nights. On this night, the eve of the battle, wearied by the long march of the morning, and the exciting rumors and looking forward of the evening, he soon fell fast asleep, but paid for this rare luxury by waking up at one in the morning. Finding himself unable to go to sleep again immediately, he got up, partly dressed himself, and stood for some time in the door of his tent. That was the time to test himself; to see whether his resolutions, his intentions, his faith, would stand the depressing influence of the night-watches. Who does not know the unstrung, unnerved, even desponding feeling, which so often attends upon a midnight waking? The heavy weight of sleep seems to deaden the will, and the drowsy man will sometimes shrink in dismay at the thought of some task of the morrow, which the night before he had resolved to do. There is many a man who, at such a time, will feel incapable of the very effort which in a few hours he will certainly accomplish; but that will is well trained to dominion, which even at this hour can assert its wonted mastery; that resolution is strong which the powers of darkness cannot shake. Oakfield looked round; it was a dark, cold night: the moon was near the full, but almost

continually obscured by black, threatening clouds ; there was a patrol passing, and the challenge of the sentinels seemed to mark rather than to disturb the silence ; he could not see far, and where he could see, nothing but the dim outline of endless tents ; the army of the Punjab was sleeping, many perhaps dreaming of scenes very different from that stern one which they should behold at waking. Oakfield stood and looked and thought, for about half an hour, glad and thankful to find how completely he was master of himself, how collectedly he could look forward to the call of duty which awaited him, and then, groping his way back to his bed, slept till he heard the harsh notes of the bugles sounding the *reveillé*. What anxious, what hopeful, what various thoughts did those unsparing, unthinking bugles waken into life !

The whole army was in motion shortly after daybreak, marching towards the enemy's position, which was but a few miles off in a straight line ; but the march was lengthened to about ten miles by a considerable détour to the right, which the British general thought it advisable to make, partly to distract the enemy's attention, but principally to get as clear as possible of the thick jungle on which the Sikhs appeared so much to rely. The 90th, as has been mentioned, belonged to the 3d Infantry division, and were one of the two native regiments brigaded with the Queen's 101st. The divisions marched separately in column, with deploying distance between them. The baggage was two or three miles in the rear, guarded principally by Irregular Cavalry. Oakfield rode close to his own company, dismounting and falling in with it whenever a halt occurred, that is to say, every ten minutes ; for an army advancing upon a hostile position, and also moving across a country full of obstacles, seldom proceeds for a longer time without a halt. The tedium of this snail's progress was, however, relieved by the excite-

ment of catching from time to time glimpses of bodies of the enemy, and an occasional interchange of shots between the reconnoitring parties of the two armies. In this way they moved on till nearly noon, when a pretty general halt seemed to have occurred, whereupon a general dismounting took place among the infantry officers, accompanied by an equally general requisition for the contents of knapsacks, and a corresponding demand for "nips" from sundry queer-shaped bottles. "Hallo, Jenkyns!" shouted Oakfield, as his friend the aide-de-camp galloped up, "where are you off at that rate?"

"Ah, Oakfield, is that you? I can't stop a moment, my good fellow," Jenkyns replied, pulling up his horse, however, with a jerk which almost threw him on his haunches; "I am just going to order the Horse Artillery to the front."

"But I say, just wait a minute," said Oakfield, springing from the ground where most of the officers of the 90th were lounging in various attitudes with cheroots in their mouths; "these surely are our Irregular Cavalry, and not the enemy's, so close to us, just under the tree there?"

"Those? those are just the fellows we are going to make scarce! you see that high mound about half a mile ahead, with a tent or two at the top of it? Well, that 's their advance post; our heavy guns are just going to open upon it," and as he spoke, a wreath of white smoke suddenly rose three or four hundred yards ahead, and the deep-toned report of a heavy gun gave confirmation to his words.

"One moment more, that 's a good fellow," cried Oakfield, laying his hand upon his horse's neck, and becoming rather excited, for the report of the first gun fired *in earnest* has the peculiarity of making the heart beat a second or two quicker; "you don't mean to say that we shall have to storm those heights out there?" pointing as he spoke to a

low range of hills on the right front, with all the appearance of a large camp on the highest ridge.

Several of the 90th gathered round to listen to their conversation, for an aide-de-camp is a great authority in the day of battle.

"No, no," said Jenkyns, "that *is* their camp, but their whole army is drawn up in the jungle, just in front of us, a few hundred yards, say half a mile, on the other side of that village and mound, — Chillianwalla I believe they call it; and pretty tough work we shall have to turn them out. Their left rests on those heights, and I suppose we shall have to follow them up there, for of course they will retreat in that direction. Well, good by, old fellow, good luck to you; I can't stop a minute longer, — stayed five too many already," — and with vicious dig of the spurs, away he went like a shot.

Oakfield followed him with his eyes, and shortly, issuing from a cloud of dust in the rear, he observed a body of British Cavalry trotting up sharply, in column of squadrons, and making a détour to the left; while, shaving the regiments in their way and scattering right and left any stragglers on the road, some troops of Horse Artillery came thundering up at a canter.

"How are you, Stanton?" exclaimed one of the officers of the 90th, as, from some check in front, the troop to which Oakfield's friend belonged pulled up alongside of that corps. "As usual, you lucky dogs are always in for it first; leave a little for us, that 's good fellows."

"Humph!" said Stanton, "no fear of our not doing that, my dear sir; you 'll have lots of it before the day is over, I can see. I 've not forgotten Ferozeshah yet, and to-day will be no bad imitation of it, I expect. O what a lovely shell! good, good, by Jove! right in the middle of them," he continued, watching the practice of the heavy guns with all the

gusto of an artilleryman. "Well, Oakfield, my dear old boy," turning to him, "I only hope we shall both of us find our legs safe and sound under the mess-table to-morrow; *some* of us cannot, that 's very certain. Do you feel your theory up to its work," he added, laughing, "now that it is going to be tested with practice?"

Oakfield replied to this with a smile, a nod, and a grasp of the hand, which was expressive enough, although, perhaps, rather in the Lord Burleigh style. "You 're not the kind of man, any more than I am, I fancy, Stanton, to think much of presentiments and that style of thing."

"No," said the other, "I think not."

"You never have a feeling, an indescribable sensation (that 's the expression) that you are likely to be killed or severely wounded."

"No," rejoined Stanton, slowly, with more hesitation than Oakfield expected; "no, I really don't think I do feel, or ever have felt, anything of the kind. I certainly feel, every action I go into, that, having escaped so often without a hurt (this will be, as I told you, my sixth general action), my chance on the Babbage calculation principles is lessening; but I always *do* hope, and more than half expect, to get off; indeed, I almost fancy I should feel more surprised than anything else if I was hit; absurd, of course; but I find the best plan (the pleasantest I mean, as well as the right one) is never to think of there being any danger in *anything* during an action; go ahead, thinking only of your duty, and watching the shot as little as possible; it will be all right, depend upon it."

"All falls in pat with my theory," said Oakfield.

"Well, then, your theory is worth more than I was inclined to allow the other day. Well, here we are going on again; — What 's that order?" (as the word of command, "The column will deploy into line," was repeated by successive

shouts from regiment to regiment till it reached the 90th.)
"You had better be off, Oakfield. Good by, my dear Ned; good luck."

"Good by, dear Stanton. God bless you," responded Oakfield, shaking hands with his friend, while the guns slowly moved forward.

In a few moments they had broken again into a canter, and Oakfield drew his sword and fell in with his company, for the regiment was now beginning to move into line. On the mound already mentioned was posted a strong picket of the enemy. This was soon dispersed, and the mound taken possession of by the British troops. From this point the whole Sikh army could be descried, drawn up in order of battle. It was now three o'clock in the afternoon, and Lord Gough hesitated about making an attack that day. Considering, however, the proximity of the enemy to the ground which the Quartermaster-General's department were already beginning to mark out for an encampment, and that the Sikhs never had before and never might again venture so fair a front in the field with their whole force, he was probably justified, with the splendid force under his command, in seizing the opportunity offered by the presumption of the enemy. The Sikhs, as usual, opened their guns from a long range; this was replied to by the British heavy artillery halted in the line. After a cannonade on both sides for about an hour, the Cavalry and Horse Artillery were ordered to the front. Like hounds darting from the leash they dashed forward, and soon the rolling of wheels and the clanking of sabres and harness were lost in one continued roar from above a hundred pieces of artillery. On every side the shot crashed through the jungle; branches of trees were shattered and torn from their stems; rolling horses and falling men gave an early character to this fearful evening. During this cannonade the Infantry divisions had been lying

down. The order to advance was now given to the 3d division, which formed the left of the army, supported on the left by its Horse Artillery (amongst them that troop to which Stanton belonged), while to the left of the artillery again were the 3d Dragoons. That division accordingly advanced, with what fatal result to the gallant 24th is well known. This regiment, together with the 25th N. I., formed the right brigade of the left division; either by an injudicious order, or, as stated in the official despatch, by mistaking a chance movement of their commandant's for a signal, the 24th broke into the double at a distance from the guns far too great to be accomplished at the charge; outstripping the native corps, they arrived breathless and exhausted at the guns, where a terrific and hitherto concealed fire of musketry awaited them. The native corps came up and well sustained their European brethren, but both were repulsed; not until twenty-one European officers, twelve sergeants, and four hundred and fifty rank and file of the 24th had been killed and wounded. The Horse Artillery moved to their support, and drove away the enemy in the act of cutting up the wounded. Meanwhile the left brigade of this division, including the 90th regiment, moved forward, formed line to their right, and overthrew that portion of the enemy which had obtained a temporary advantage over the right brigade. In this last movement Oakfield found and seized an opportunity of obtaining that individual distinction which he had so much desired. As the 90th regiment, formed in line, arrived amongst the enemy's guns, the old native officer, who carried the royal color of the regiment, was cut down by the blow of a Sikh tulwar.* As he fell, his slayer stretched forward to secure the prize, when Oakfield, who commanded the left centre company, seizing the color from the falling man with his left hand, with his right warded off the descending

* *Tulwar*, broadsword.

blow which his adversary instantly aimed at him, then, with a successful delivery of the point of his own regulation sword (the one successful answer which that feeble weapon can make to the terrific, slashing cuts of the Sikh broadsword), eased himself of his enemy, and retained the color, which he carried till the conclusion of the action. The venerable Commander-in-chief was watching these proceedings with eager anxiety. If he was disappointed by the result of the infantry advance on the left, that of the right division was eminently successful, spiking the whole of the enemy's guns in their front, and dispersing the Sikhs themselves wherever they became visible. Such was the conduct of the right infantry division; on their right, again, was a brigade of European and Native Cavalry, supported by troops of Horse Artillery. The cavalry were required to follow up the success of the infantry by an effective charge.

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The ground thus lost upon the right by the "false movements" of the cavalry, and upon the left by the honorable failure of the gallant 24th, was subsequently recovered, but the sun had set some time, and it was necessary to collect the army together for the night; the enemy drew off the ground in good order, — not vanquished, — having recovered and taking with them nearly all the guns which had been captured. The Commander-in-chief rode along the whole line, giving directions to each division; as he passed the 90th regiment, Oakfield, grasping the color he had saved, joined with all his might in the enthusiastic cheering with which, notwithstanding the depression on every heart at having fought without victory, the brave old general was received by all. Sir Colin Campbell's division, reinforced by another brigade from the right, was formed up, at the end of the action, just where the 24th had suffered so severely. Oakfield's regiment was on the very spot. He counted the

bodies of nine officers lying dead in as many square yards; there lay the dead bodies of the two Pennycuicks side by side; those of the men almost touched each other. It was originally intended that this division should remain to keep the ground; had this intention been adhered to, it is probable that most of the enemy's captured guns would have been brought in. When, however, the failure of the cavalry on the right became known, when it was ascertained that, however great the loss of the enemy might have been, they were still repulsed certainly, but not defeated, it was determined that the whole army should fall back for the night upon the village of Chillianwalla. So this division began its retreat to join the rest of the force. This march in the dark was, as Oakfield and Stanton (who, it will be remembered, both belonged to this division) afterwards agreed, the longest and most trying part of all the day's proceedings. It was pitch dark, and the jungle was high and strong. None knew exactly what direction to take. The enemy's bugles seemed to be sounding on all sides of them. They moved at a snail's pace, repeatedly sounding a bugle, and waiting for a reply. They saw lights, but were even doubtful whether these denoted their own or the Sikh camp. At last, by a careful feeling of the way and sending men on before, to reconnoitre as best they could under the circumstances, they found that they were in the right direction, and so reached the rest of the army without hinderance. The regiments halted where they came up, blended promiscuously amongst each other. Oakfield reported to his commanding officer the fact of his being in possession of the regimental color. He was received by Colonel Pringle, who had witnessed the transaction, and was acutely sensible that his corps had been saved so painful a blow as the loss of the color, graciously, almost cordially; was told that his conduct would certainly be favorably reported, and desired

to make over his trust to the native officer next in seniority to the one who had fallen, whose duty it now became to carry it. As Oakfield, after obeying this order, joined a group of officers of his own regiment, who were discussing sorrowfully the condition of four of their comrades, of whom one was killed and three more or less seriously wounded, there was heard the sullen report of a heavy gun. All started. Could it be that the enemy meditated a night attack; and if they did, was the British army in a state to resist efficiently? But another and another followed, at marked and regular intervals. "Why, confound their impudence!" said Perkins, "if the blackguards are not firing a royal salute!" They counted the guns; — twenty-one were discharged, in regular saluting time, by the Sikhs, in celebration of *their* victory of Chillianwalla!

Oakfield now went to look for Stanton, whom he found, with some difficulty; and the two, having shaken hands cordially, sallied out to wander about and gather particulars of the day, and also to pick up, if possible, something to eat and drink. They walked towards the mound whereon the lights of the field-hospital, at a distance, looked cheerful, shining through the dark, threatening night. But there was little cheerfulness there. The dragoons had galloped right through the hospital, and there were signs everywhere of the havock they had committed. The surgeons were working without a moment's cessation; operations were being performed by the uncertain glare of candles in the open air; doolies, with wounded men in them, were being continually brought in; already those who had died were being thrown carelessly out of the doolie, to make room for fresh occupants, soon, perhaps, to follow them. In many doolies two wounded men were lying together. As Stanton and Oakfield arrived, they observed a European soldier, with his head bandaged up and his face covered with blood, shouting

in an Irish tone, which, amid that scene of horror, strangely and almost ludicrously recalled the land of blarney: "O God! I wish you would take this fellow out; he has been dead these three hours, and I can't stretch my legs for him." The horror of this place, even for those accustomed to surgical operations, and who were kept up by a sense of duty, was almost overpowering; to Stanton and Oakfield it was quite so. They were passing out, when a faint yet deep voice caught their ear: "Oakfield!" Oakfield started; he knew that voice, though he had never yet heard it addressing him in other than angry tones. Turning to the doolie from which the sound proceeded, he saw, by the yellow light of a candle that was flaring wildly directly overhead, the countenance, now ghastly white and pinched by the approaching hand of death, of his late adversary, Stafford. He started, and, as he looked at him, shuddered; but his course was clear. "Stanton," he said, disengaging his arm, "you must excuse me a little while; look here."

"I shall stay with you," replied Stanton; and they both sat down on the ground by the side of the dying man.

"Has any doctor been to you yet?" asked Stanton.

"O yes!" he said, in that same death-stricken, yet calm, unagitated voice; "one came for a minute or so, which was quite enough. They can do nothing for me, I know that."

A violent fit of coughing interrupted him, and the florid bright blood that foamed at his lips showed plainly that the doctors could indeed do nothing for him, that he was shot through the lungs. "Water," he gasped faintly. Oakfield went to get him some.

"He must n't speak again," Stanton said to Oakfield; "another attack like that would kill him."

"Don't talk, Stafford," said Oakfield, bending over him; "we will stay here and do anything we can for you."

The smile of the dying man, as he expressed his thanks

with a nod, played with an unwonted softness over features fixed by too long habit into an expression of harsh severity. They sat by him for an hour or so, giving him water from time to time. One of the field surgeons came up at once, looked at him, then, turning to Stanton, shook his head, and passed on to a case where his services might be of more avail. Stafford saw what passed, for his eyes were still open, though the lids drooped heavily over them. "Ay, ay," he said, "I know it 's all up."

"Hush," said Oakfield, gently; "don't talk."

"O, yes! talking can only make a few minutes' difference"; he stopped, exhausted already; then resumed, — and neither Oakfield nor Stanton interrupted him, for he had said the truth, it could make but a few minutes' difference, — "Oakfield, forgive me."

Yes; even at that hour it cost a struggle to that proud man to use the unwonted language of penitence. Merciful struggle! that even at this eleventh hour an opportunity of self-conquest was given; merciful inspiration of the Spirit of God that it was also taken! Oakfield's eyes were full. There is always something touching in the melting mood of a proud, stern man; most awful when it is in the very presence of death, when the infinite evil of pride and good of meekness are not indeed more real than in the noonday of life, but so far more evident. He took Stafford's cold hand in both his own: "God bless you, my dear Stafford, and forgive and comfort you!"

The prayer for comfort was heard. Again the same soft smile shone over that now almost lifeless countenance; he tried to return the pressure of the hand, he tried to speak, when the coughing returned, the red florid blood rushed in a torrent from his mouth; and when the fit was over, life was gone with it. Stafford was dead. The duellist had shown more bravery in his death than ever he had done in his life-

time. Stanton and Oakfield still sat and looked, and were silent. As the latter withdrew his hand from what was now the grasp of a corpse, one of the hospital attendants came up, looked at the body, and said, "By your leave, gentlemen, we want this doolie." The dead body was lifted up with as much delicacy as haste could permit, and placed upon the ground; as they moved it the shirt fell open upon the breast. "Look there," said Stanton, and he pointed to a small blue mark over which the skin had almost entirely closed.

"What! you don't mean that that is a musket-shot?" said Oakfield, with the natural surprise of one who had never seen a gunshot wound.

"Ah, yes!" replied the other, "death can enter in by a very narrow entrance."

They replaced the disturbed garment with respectful tenderness, looked once more at the placid features, then rose and walked homeward. It was a dark, cold, blowing night; the rain fell heavily at intervals. "That is rather different," observed Oakfield, when they had walked some time in silence, "from the last death-bed I witnessed."

"Whose was that?" asked Stanton.

"Arthur Vernon's."

They parted; Stanton betook himself to his troop, Oakfield to his regiment, and slept soundly, wrapped in their cloaks upon the cold wet ground.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!"

WORDSWORTH.

THE next day, and indeed for three days after the battle, it rained heavily. Fortunately the baggage came up, and as there seemed no prospect of an immediate renewal of hostilities, orders were given to mark out an encampment. The 90th marched down to their ground, and there, just as the parade was being dismissed, while the officers were congregated together just after the commandant had left the ground, Perkins stepped forward and said to Oakfield: "Oakfield! I am desired by my brother officers to express the sincere regret we all feel for the injurious suspicions entertained about you, and to beg your pardon; and," he added in a less formal tone, "I apologize most sincerely for any coldness you may have observed in me since your unlucky trial."

Several officers stept up and shook hands cordially with Oakfield; even Brooks and Straddles were overcome by the regimental feeling, and yielded to it when it veered in this direction as completely as they had done when it set in that diametrically opposite. Oakfield was deeply gratified; he said a few matter-of-course words about his being obliged,

glad to have done his duty, and so on; but having no turn for speechifying, and feeling moreover that it would be out of place, he took Perkins's arm and walked with him to his tent, where he spent most of the day, discussing the events of the previous afternoon. That evening a mournful scene took place. All the bodies of the officers who had fallen were interred on the mound. It was a drizzly evening; the sky black with rolling clouds. The bodies sown up in sheets were arranged by the side of several broad, deep grave-pits. On all sides officers were assembled to look their last upon what may have been once some dear friend. Old Lord Gough was there, the tears rolling down his cheeks, insensible to the storm which beat about his silvery locks.

To this exciting action succeeded another period of inaction. The Sikhs, reinforced by Chutter Singh, suddenly left their position at Russool, and took up their final one at Guzrat, after an abortive attempt to cross the Chenab at Wuzzeerabad, with the intention, as they arrogantly said, and as was commonly rumored, of marching direct upon Lahore.

The army under Lord Gough moved to the attack, being reinforced by the whole of the Mooltan force during the 18th, 19th, and 20th of February. The disappointment of Stanton and Oakfield may be imagined, when, on the arrival of the last column from Mooltan, they still did not find Wykham. He had been left behind, suffering from a severe, but happily not dangerous wound, received in the trenches before Mooltan. The morning of the 21st was a glorious one, different indeed from the lowering sky which heralded in Chillianwalla. Oakfield understood, as he rode along with his regiment and watched the bright sunshine resting on the fields, richly green, and noisy with birds, while as far as the eye could reach wended along amid this peaceful beauty masses of sparkling steel, variegated with flags, the darker bodies of cavalry, the still gloomier columns of artillery with

their ominous rumble, in what consisted the delightful excitement of that pomp and circumstance of glorious war, which on former occasions he had looked for, but certainly failed to find.

Almost all felt confident as to the result of the day, and no precaution of steadiness and patience were omitted on this occasion to justify the wholesome feeling. No sooner did the enemy open his guns upon the advancing army than the line was halted. The Infantry lay down; the Horse Artillery and field-batteries were ordered to the front, and, together with the eighteen monster siege guns brought up from Mooltan, and dragged by elephants, whose huge bodies gave a strange tinge of antiquity and orientalism to the modern and business-like appearance of the magnificently equipped British army, opened a cannonade, which the veteran Commander justly described, with the concurrent testimony of all who were present, as the most magnificent and most terrible in its effects he had ever witnessed. The Sikhs answered it with their usual courage, rapidity, and precision. They were the same race of men, animated by despair, who, at Ferozeshah, at Sobraon, at Chillianwalla, had been cut down at their guns; nor were they unworthy of their previous heroism now. But this cannonade was "beyond the rules." As they afterwards said themselves, "it rained fire." A diminution in their fire was perceptible; instantly the Horse Artillery moved forward, and took up a new and a nearer point of attack. On and on they moved with a cruel cogency, and still the storm of shot waxed more and more furious. The enemy, by a last effort, clung to the most defensible parts of their position; but the Infantry brigades, now coming up to take their share in the conflict, drove them out of these at the point of the bayonet. The huge line wavers, breaks, retires, flies; and the Sikh army is in fact dissolved, the Punjab as good as conquered. The whirlwind

charge of the Scinde Horse upon the left, the vigorous pursuit of the Regular and Irregular Cavalry, complete the discomfiture. The great pursuer, Sir Walter Gilbert, is despatched with a powerful force in pursuit: Turpin's ride to York is outdone by the march to Peshawur. Such a defeat, followed up by such a pursuit, was more than the broken spirit of the Sikh army could rally against; and the Sikh chiefs, together with an immense number of their followers and guns, were surrendered unconditionally beyond the banks of the Jhelum.

Once more that huge army was assembled; not the whole of it indeed, for the Bombay column, who had so signalized themselves both at Mooltan and Goojerat, returned with their alien laurels to their own place; but it was a powerful and victorious army that was assembled in March, 1849, in that ancient Sikh capitol, Lahore. Here Oakfield found poor Wykham, whose wound had healed slowly, and who was looking pale and shattered, very different from when Oakfield had last seen him the morning he left Simla. He was chagrined, too, beyond expression, at having lost his share in the glories of Goojerat. "I suppose, though," he said, "we shall get a medal for Mooltan." Ah, wonderful power of medals! Ah, magic silver mites that can inspire men to do and endure so much, and to think themselves more than rewarded if at last they obtain but thee! power that retains with great tenacity its charm, although those in high places have done their best in these last years to break the spell, and, by thankless indiscriminate distribution of what should be the peculiar and unerring indication of personal, or at least regimental merit, to reduce it to the contemptible level of the Cross of the Legion of Honor as it now is!

But while Oakfield sympathized with his friend, others again thought Oakfield himself a fitter subject of anxiety. Wykham had a healthy constitution that nine years and a

half of Indian climate had not affected; his wound was already healing; directly he would leave off fretting about Goojerat, he would go to the hills, and get quite well; but Oakfield's frame was not one to stand with impunity the hardships of a campaign, and the night exposure involved by picquet duty. He had escaped the sword of the Sikh to find, as it seemed, a more insidious enemy in the wet ground of Chillianwalla. That bright complexion seems flashed with a more delicate shade than ever; there is a yellow hue sometimes mixing with the red, which doctors do not like, and old Stanton is painfully startled when he hears that occasional harsh, sullen sounding cough.

Oakfield knew that he was ill, but the consciousness could not just now depress him. The campaign left him happier than he had been since he landed in India. He had found his theory stand fire; he had been enabled to carry out in action the plan made in calm reflection; had, in the hour of trial, been master of himself, and "seen what he foresaw"; had found faith in God as veritable a support against the Sikhs upon the banks of the Jhelum, as it had been to his people of old against the host of the Philistines. He had, in fact, proved to his own satisfaction, and of any who chose to consider of it, that a man was none the worse soldier for being a Christian.

"Well, Oakfield," said Stanton, entering the former's tent one morning in the middle of March, where Wykham also was lying on a bed, "they have countermarched you and me."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, the relief's out, and our troop goes to Ferozepore, and your regiment to Meerut."

"Do we move?" asked Wykham.

"No; all the cavalry corps stand fast; or rather go back to their old quarters."

"Hah! well; it does n't matter to me much. I mean to take my furlough in the cold weather."

"Do you really?" exclaimed Oakfield; "why, how long is it since you came to that intention?"

"Not long; but the doctor was asking this morning when my furlough would be due; and when I told him next July, he advised me to go home by all means in the cold weather; and so I shall if I can manage it."

"Are you going up to Simla in the mean while?"

"Yes; six months on medical certificate. After all," he said, with his old smile, which his friend had not seen for a long time, "it's rather lucky this," touching his wounded leg as he spoke; "for I don't suppose I could have got another season out of them on private affairs, and it would never do, you know, to spend the hot winds in the plains. It's all very well for you fellows, but I have n't seen a hot weather in the plains, Stanton, for three years."

"Young shirk, shirk!" growled Stanton; and Wykham laughed heartily.

"Oakfield, are you going to Simla?" he asked.

"I, — no: why should I go?"

"Why, you look very seedy. I shall speak to your doctor about you."

"Thank you," said Oakfield; "but I advise you, as a friend, not to."

"Why not?"

"Because you might as well try to coax a bear with a sore head, as to get to windward of old McGrowdy about one of his patients; he'd probably call you an impertinent boy, and turn on his heel, and walk off whistling, to tell somebody how he had snubbed you."

"Confound him," said Wykham, who did n't at all like this description, especially as he saw how Stanton enjoyed it; "I should call him out."

"No good that even; for he would n't come."

"Would n't he?" began Wykham; then, recollecting himself, "Oakfield, my boy, I was going to commit myself."

"I thought," said Oakfield, "that I had made a convert of you, at Simla."

"Well, upon my honor, I half thought so myself; but you see, when the screw was taken off—"

"I being the screw?" interrupted Oakfield. "Well, if I do go to Simla, I shall come and live with you, and then we 'll apply it again."

"Well, you shall live with me, Oakfield; because, you see, I shall want somebody to share the house; in consideration of which, I will even risk another such sermon as that I got once behind Jacko."

"Ah, master Fred, there 's not much the matter with you, I see; when you 're as impudent as that, you are in a good way to be off the sick-list."

"Not till my sick-certificate is signed, you may take your oath," said Wykham.

"Well, Oakfield," said Stanton, "if you and Wykham have done chaffing, I vote we go over and see Jenkyns: I 've hardly spoken to him once since Guzrat: — Wykham seems getting all right," he continued, as they left the tent; "but I declare, Oakfield, I think he was right about you."

"What about me?"

"That you ought to go to the hills."

"Well," said Oakfield, "I dare say he was. I am not well, I know; old McGrowdy was asking me a day or two ago, if I did n't dread the heat, which was a great advance for him to make. I think he 'd give me a certificate."

"Take it then, my good fellow, by all means; and then come down from Simla in the cold weather, and join your appointment."

"What appointment?"

"O, they are certain to give you something, now that you have passed in both languages; and after saving the color the other day."

"I don't feel confident, I must say, of their offering; nor if they do, of my —" He stopped.

"Well?" said Stanton.

"Why, I know you 'll be in a rage when I say it, — of my accepting."

"Nay," said Stanton, "I don't see what there is in that to put me in a rage."

"I thought you 'd call it paradoxical; an affectation of singularity, and all that; and yet, on second thoughts, you ought not to, for you have done the same thing yourself; you never applied for an appointment, I fancy, and that alone is rather singular."

"I never applied, because I knew I should never get one, and I am not so fond of the mere process of asking a favor, as to go through it for the sake of getting a civil refusal, in a public letter; but still I allow I do share your heresy upon this, more than most other points. For a man who is not pecuniarily straitened, and has plenty of work made for himself, a mere drudgery appointment is not to be snatched at merely because Smith, Jones, and Robinson think it is a tremendous piece of luck, and so on: yet, I should be sorry, Oakfield, if you were to make up your mind to lead the life which I have led, and now shall always lead."

"Why?"

"Why I am not sure it is at all the best thing for a man; there are few people, I think, so capable of standing it as I am, (you know I 'm not a conceited fool, so I shall not take up five minutes in every sentence in would-be-modest circumventions,) and for one who cannot stand it, it is wretchedly injurious. Depend upon it, there is a difficulty in

sticking perseveringly to work made for yourself, which you ought to scruple before encountering as your position for life; there is an assistance to the whole character in compulsory work, even the commonest routine drudgery, which you should consider well before you venture to abandon."

"Well," said Oakfield, "I allow that; but if I weigh myself, and come to the conclusion that I *can* both sustain the difficulties and dispense with the help, what then?"

"Why, then, I grant you, you have a right to make a free choice; only, still I would ask you whether you are quite certain that your choice would be rightly made, in preferring your own work to that which *some* appointments might hold out to you. I fully agree with you that an appointment which involves a great deal of occupation and but little work, which would, in fact, oblige you to spend the greater part of your time in accounts, or copying, or other such like clerk-work, leaves little or no question; every man is justified in deciding for himself whether or not so much extra money a month will compensate him for what he will consider waste of time; and if he decides in the negative, I for one shall think him, not foolish, but wise; but there are other appointments, Oakfield, where the work is really such as a man may well devote himself to; I never can think civil employ, for instance, to be sneered at."

"Of course not sneered at; why sneer at anything which men think fit to do? It is that sneering at occupations and callings which we ourselves do not affect, that causes so much mischief. People do not choose a path in life for themselves, but follow that which their neighbors declare to be the best. I do believe there is more real intolerance on this matter of a profession than on any other subject in the world; I do not sneer at the calling of a billiard-marker; why should I at civil employ? But I think one is bound to

examine the latter as rigidly as the former; not to take the excellence of one for granted, any more than that of the other."

"Well, but what do you mean by examining? Examine what?"

"Examine what there is in any line of life which seems to open itself, that may assist or retard the great object of life."

"Which is —"

"One's own spiritual life."

"Yes," said Stanton, after a pause, "I allow that; our own, because such selfishness involves, in fact, the highest self-abandonment. Go on."

"How shall I go on? I say this civil employ you were talking of is good or bad to me, desirable or the reverse, according as it could help to develop that in me which requires developing, and repress that which wants repressing. I believe in several ways I should find it helpful; that the regular hard work would be good for my indolence, and its practical activity a healthy counterpoise to those theorizing tendencies you often speak of; then, on the other hand, I should have, you see, to give up that literary mode of life which you have pursued with such success, which you feel has been a better 'appointment' for you than any the government could have given you, and which, as I believe I should like it best, so I have been always willing to hope would suit me best; though I am doubtful, I own, — doubtful of my own power of overcoming indolence, without some external force to assist me."

"You are right, I am sure; it *is* an awful tug, I know, to me, going on month after month and day after day working as regularly as if the terrors of *wigging* overhung indolence, instead of conscience' reproof merely; the law is as binding, I know, a good deal more so, but infinitely harder to obey."

"But if obeyed," continued Oakfield, "nothing strengthens the character so much; it is the very perfection of obedience in a good sense, the most complete opponent of Jacobinism and lawlessness; so that it is the best thing, you see, for those who are equal to it; and it cannot be without reluctance that we judge ourselves unequal; turn away from the best, and follow the second-best; besides, there is another danger in external laws; it is easier to obey them, but it is also easy to depend upon them, which is emasculating and wrong; they may make work easier, but they also tempt us to devote ourselves to it."

"Do you speak of that as a temptation? A man worth his salt would wish, I should think, to devote himself to any calling he enters upon; a clergyman devotes himself to his preaching and visiting, and you praise him; you call him a good officer in this country, who, like Middleton, gives himself up entirely to his magisterial duties."

"And yet, Stanton, I think one of the things which you and I both so like and admire in Middleton is that he does *not* 'give himself up' to his work. I do *not* praise that man, clergyman, or what else, who 'gives himself up' to his work; I should desire to enter myself upon civil employ, or any other employ, with the deliberate intention of not 'devoting' myself to it; an intention, I fancy, hard to keep."

"O, now you get to paradox again!" said Stanton, impatiently.

"If you mean by paradox finding fallacies in common phrases and notions, I hope I am paradoxical; though I know I am not so much so as you, who have long lived in practical rejection of common notions, acting paradox for the last twelve years. What I said, I believe, — and so do you, I dare say, if you think of it; and don't start off and toss your old mane directly you fancy you catch me tripping."

"My dear Oakfield, I will not be preached out of common sense."

"Yes, but you ought to be, by that which is higher than common sense; the common sense is insufficient where nice discrimination is required."

"Do you really mean to contend that an honest man, voluntarily entering upon any profession or business, is not bound to do his best in it?"

"I contend for nothing of the sort, and your common sense ought to have saved you from uttering such a commonplace; what you have said now is just as true, and just as original, as if you had said, 'An honest man ought not to steal.'"

"I ought to be angry at your cool impertinence, young man," said Stanton, smiling, however, amicably.

"Not you; but what I said was a very different thing; that a man should not devote himself to his work. To do his work to the best of his ability, to put all his energy into it, is, of course, an obvious duty: to 'devote himself' to it is a sin."

"I see what you mean: but you are at your old game: the distinction is too fine, of no practical value."

"Of as much value," rejoined Oakfield, "as any of the nice distinctions between the border shades of right and wrong, which go to make up the diagnosis of morals: nay, of greater importance: for a man who devotes or gives himself up to any work, to anything, to any name save One, in earth or heaven, is an idolater. His work, be it what it may, is still but an appendage, a circumstance, not of the first importance to him, but at highest the second: he may not give it the first place. That belongs not to his work any more than to his coat, but to him; not to the appurtenances of the man, even the highest and noblest of them, but to the man. He may devote himself to God, devote himself to spiritual

life: it is not profane nor selfish, but in the correct meaning of the words true, to say he may devote himself to himself, but not to his circumstances."

"A needless caution to nine men out of ten."

"I rather think not; but even so, needful for the tenth: and if I think myself the tenth for whom it is needful, what difference does it make to me that nine others want another, an opposite truth? Let them take it in God's name; but not presume to quarrel with me (nor I with them) for choosing mine. But it is a more common evil, I suspect, especially among very busy men, than you seem to think."

"It is at any rate a nobler vice than mere animal idleness, and a rarer."

"Yes, a nobler kind of selfish idolatry; but at best never noble, nor anything but base. The animal-indulging, idle man worships, 'devotes himself' to his belly, his dinner, his horse-racing, and neglects himself, — his soul, which decays. The busy man devotes himself to his office, his 'cases,' his appeals, — a nobler vice you say: be it so: at any rate it sounds better; the language of one man's idolatry is revolting to us, the other commands our respect; but the result is much the same in both: the accidents of the man live, the essence dies; the soul can be smothered in a lawsuit as effectually as in a beer-tankard; and fifty years hence the former, as well as the latter, will be gone, and the two men left equally bare, equally dead, equally unprofitable."

"You should have been a padré, Ned. Wykham might well talk of your preaching."

"I may allow Wykham to talk of it, but not you," answered Oakfield, laughing. "I dare say I do preach to Wykham, or did once: I converse with you; that is, I would, if you were not crusty. If it is a padré's business only to exalt the soul, then I allow I ought to have been a padré, and so ought you; and indeed all but padrés must be

in a bad way. I will, by your leave, call myself a padré henceforth. Ah! my dear Stanton, what padré shall deliver my soul, or make agreement unto God for it? Have I not a life, a being, ever struggling for the birth, ever driven back by sin, by form, by conventionalities of my own or others' making? and shall I ignore all this because I wear a red coat instead of a black one? No," he added, seeing that Stanton was about to interrupt, "I know that you were only in joke, and did n't mean that: but — "

"But what?"

"But God deliver us from all forms! I could say now, I will never listen to or act a part in a lie again. I will never go to a church where God is not worshipped, never mix in a society where only animal life is acknowledged, never even speak with respect of what does not approve itself to me as good, be it priest, or altar, or sacrament, or whatever man calls most sacred; but I will worship God under the stars, and call good good, and evil evil, the liberal liberal, and the churl churl, the wise man wise, and the fool foolish."

"The fit will pass," said Stanton, "and you will find that till you can ignore time, and space, and mortality, you must even accommodate yourself to their imposed necessities and imperfections."

"I know it," he said, sadly, "the fit will pass; it is even now passing. God knows there is no fear of our intuitions lasting too long: it has passed, and I am the less happy; the more prudent, and perhaps the less wise. I see that dust-storm coming up, which will make us uncomfortable, and then cool us; and I acknowledge that we are in a composite world. I remember that I have once or twice this morning spoken harshly or violently, and I acknowledge the same thing; and come down to the old conclusion, from which the soul, in what you call its fits, will now and then try to escape, but is forced back again by matter-of-fact, merciless

nature, that we must take the evil with the good, that we can no more affirm perfect truth than we can do it. All true, sir. The fit is over and I shall go to mess to-night, and to church to-morrow, and jog on in an orthodox fashion again till the next fit, trying to patch up irreconcilable differences as best I can; O, doubtless I shall be very wise!"

He spoke ironically, almost bitterly. Stanton knew what he felt, what he suffered; he too had felt the same. What young man does not feel the same at some time or other of his career; when he is tempted (O, shall we say by his good or evil genius?) to effect for himself an entire revolution, to stand on his own ground, and not another's; to go wherever his belief leads him in full trust? and then there is the painful, self-reproaching sinking back again into the strong grasp of form and fashion; there are the last clinging glances to the eastern sun, as the man, now yielding to the force of the actual, beholds the last glimpses of the real, —

"To die away,
And fade into the light of common day," —

and so, as Stanton said himself, with a half-unconscious bitterness, "the fit passes," and the sobriety of respectability and orthodoxy succeeds. "And so," resumed Stanton, "what is the upshot of all this? Do you intend to take your appointment?"

"I must admire the delicious gravity with which we have first assumed our castle, and then disputed as to whether or no we will take possession: why as to my appointment which is in the clouds, I will postpone the decision till it comes down to earth, and then I say I shall have plenty of time to consider of it. I think I probably should; for I believe indolence would be a greater snare to me than idolatry."

"To descend to sublunary matters," said Stanton, "the pay is a consideration."

"Well, I can't allow that even; I manage to live well enough."

"But you will marry some day, and then you won't be able to manage on 'Ensign's pay'?"

"I don't expect to be an Ensign all my life; but at any rate I can't understand to provide for a future, and very vague contingency."

"Do you say you live well enough at present, Oakfield? Are you out of debt?"

"I am no more in debt than the batta,* if we get it, will amply clear. I never was before the campaign."

"You don't assent to the common cry just now that Ensigns cannot live upon their pay?"

"Why, you know, Stanton, by your own account, the fact of its being a common cry is sufficient to make me mistrust it; but really there seems to me to be something in it almost shocking."

"Well, I agree with you entirely. I do despise that cant most heartily; — the very idea of asking whether an Ensign *can* live on his pay, when there are some scores who *do*. Why if one did, it would be proof positive that it *could* be done."

"Exactly," said Oakfield, "that is the folly of it; and besides the folly, I really do think that there is something fearful in asking whether a man (a soldier too) can live on 200*l.* a year; it always sounds like insolence to the thousands of good honest men who live on twenty; like cruelty to the tens of thousands who live on less than ten."

"Very true," said Stanton; "the Ensign would tell you, however, that he had his position as a gentleman to keep up."

"Yes, I suppose he would."

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* *Batta*, the donation generally given, of late years, to the Indian armies after a campaign.

"Well, and what should you say to him?"

"Why, I think if I condescended to say anything in answer to such melancholy folly, I should ask him how much gentlemanliness cost, how cheap one could do it, what was the price of the very best article, and so on."

"Good," said Stanton; "I am glad that we have found one subject on which we can declaim conjointly and in peace. How far do you carry your socialism, Oakfield?"

Oakfield started. "Socialism! O yes, — how far do I carry it? Why, I suppose as far as one has occasion for it. It is like every truth, I suppose, infinite."

"Surely you think the Parisian socialists carry it too far?"

"I am scandalously ignorant, I am sorry to say, about Paris and Parisians; but as the Parisians, socialists or other, are, I presume, only mortal men, I will undertake to say most confidently that they have carried no truth too far; they cannot go further than finity, and, as aforesaid, all truth is infinite."

"Well, but what have murder and rapine to do with truth?"

"Just nothing; and so it is, people call that which has nothing to do with a truth a too great extension of it. No, depend upon it, your Paris friends are not too true in their socialism, though possibly terribly unbalanced."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you may walk along the truth of socialism, and the further you walk, the truer it is; but it has an antipodes, a polar truth on the other side, and if you quite neglect that side, and put all your weight on this, the seesaw is spoiled, and down you go."

"Is all truth, then, a seesaw?"

"Not in itself, I dare say, not as it is, not as God sees it; but practically it so accommodates itself to our view; — but,

Stanton, I am tired to death of talking, and here we have been sitting in your tent for the last hour, when we ought to have been going to call on Jenkyns."

"By Jove," rejoined Stanton, "so we ought; I forgot all about it."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"It is not to taste sweet things, but to do noble and true things, and vindicate himself under God's heaven as a God-made man, that the poorest son of Adam dimly longs. Show him the way of doing that, the dullest day-drudge kindles into a hero. They wrong him greatly who say he is to be seduced by ease. Difficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death, are the *allurements* that act on the heart of man. Kindle the inner genial life of him, you have a flame that burns up all lower considerations; not happiness, but something higher. One sees this even in the frivolous classes, with their 'point of honor,' and the like."

CARLYLE.

THE army at Lahore broke up a few days after the above conversation, and the regiments returned to their different cantonments. Stanton's troop, it will be remembered, was to be quartered at Ferozepore, and the 90th regiment at Meerut. Oakfield, however, applied for and obtained a month's leave to stay with the Middletons; indeed, his health was becoming so much worse, as the heat increased, that he would have been unable to stand the prolonged march. Miss Middleton was still at Allahabad, but expected to return soon; they were both received by her brother with hearty hospitality.

"Welcome to the two warriors!" he exclaimed as Oakfield and Stanton rode up from where their camp was pitched; — and he shook each of them by the hand with a heartiness that testified to the depth of the emotion which was concealed under a playful manner. Coming off their march, not having been in a house for some four or five

months, the two campaigners were able fully to appreciate the comfort of the cool, large, matted, dust-tight rooms, the purifying, refreshing bath, the luxury of iced water, and light yet substantial breakfast, to which they presently sat down. They talked of the campaign of course; — men who had served were seldom allowed to talk of anything else for the next six months; — Mr. Middleton was severe, as almost all sensible men were, upon Chillianwalla.

"It is provoking," he said, "that big people should still be allowed to go on telling lies to each other when everybody knows that they *are* lies. I am certain that it never can be wise policy to tell a lie which is sure to be found out. What can be the good of calling Chillianwalla a glorious victory, when everybody in the country knows it was almost a defeat?"

"No, no," said Stanton, "it was no defeat, nothing like it; we had rather the best of it of the two. I grant you it would have been called a victory just the same if it had been a defeat; as Ferozeshah was, where I grant you we were thoroughly and entirely beaten. But it was quite different at the Jhelum; we should have beaten them thoroughly had we had an hour's more daylight."

"Whose fault was it that there was not an hour's more daylight?"

"Ah! there I grant you; fighting at three o'clock in the afternoon was a sad mistake."

"But," said Oakfield, "could it be helped? They were firing, recollect, right into the ground where we were going to encamp."

"Well, but where was the necessity for encamping just within range of the enemy's batteries? that was the blunder; and then the notion of a British general talking of his Irish blood."

"What, is that really a true story?" said Mr. Middleton:

"is it possible? Just fancy the Duke of Wellington, whom the Irish are always claiming as a countryman, though I suppose he is in every respect the very most un-Irish, and even anti-Irish man, in his constitution and temper, that ever lived, — just fancy his telling his soldiers in the Peninsula that he fought a battle because his Irish blood could n't stand the insult of a stray shot."

"Well," interposed Oakfield, who had a vivid recollection of Lord Gough as he rode up to the 90th on the evening of the action, and as he appeared at the funeral the day after; "he is a grand old fellow, notwithstanding."

"So he is," said Stanton, heartily; "and if he was a little hasty at Chillianwalla he could n't have made a better business than he did of Guzrat."

"True; and even at Chillianwalla I shall always think he had not a fair chance; he could n't calculate upon the 24th being taken up to the charge from an unheard of distance, and, as some people say, unloaded."

"Is it possible?" said Mr. Middleton; "neither," he added, "could he have calculated upon the false movements of the cavalry on the right."

"Humph!" ejaculated Stanton, "the less said about that the better."

"I don't see that," exclaimed Oakfield; "I declare I think there has been a great deal of misplaced generosity in this matter. Depend upon it, it is not returned. The wretched natives don't get off so easily."

"I must say I agree with Oakfield," said Mr. Middleton; "not that I think the native soldiers have much reason to complain of the way in which their services are acknowledged."

"No," said Oakfield, "perhaps not."

"I should rather think not," said Stanton, in his turn warming; "on the contrary, I think the way in which the

Sepoys are belauded and bebuttered, and bebattaed after a campaign, as if their fighting — in other words, doing what they are paid for — was the most wonderful thing in the world, is the grossest as well as the most impolitic thing in the world."

They all agreed that this was true.

"But the fact is," added Stanton, "we are all of us a great deal too fond of buttering each other on these occasions. It is the tendency of the age to try and make things easy, to get honor and glory cheap, without suffering for them; hence that wretched system of squandering medals and C. B.-ships after a campaign, with such absurd, indiscriminating profusion that they are hardly worth the having."

"But how can you discriminate?" asked Mr. Middleton; "you must give them to all who were present."

"Present where?" cried Stanton; "present under fire, and I agree with you; but men get them now-a-days who are in as great security all the time as if they were a thousand miles off. Surely they might limit the distribution to those who were actually engaged. I believe the army would thank them to do so. No officer likes to wear a medal which he feels he has not earned. I know in my own case, I would as soon think of wearing the Waterloo medal, as that for Maharajpore."

"Were you present at Maharajpore?"

"I was with the army, but saw no more of the action than you did. I was on duty at the time in camp. I had no right to the medal, whereas that for the Sutlej, and for this last business, if we get it, I am and shall be as proud of as you could wish."

"That distinction would be rather hard, would it not," suggested Mr. Middleton, "on those who by no fault of theirs are absent, yet belong to the army?"

"I don't see that it is hard. It is very unlucky of course for the man whose roster for any detached duty comes round on the day of a general action; and anybody of military spirit will deeply regret the bad fortune which keeps him out of the field; will accept his inglorious duty as a hard and unpleasant one, but still a duty; and the man who regrets being unable to enter the field will be the first to refuse to be decorated as though he had been there. It is no fault of the regiments down at Barrackpore that they were not at Chillianwalla, but we should think it rather odd if they claimed the medal. In the same way it was no fault, but a great misfortune, for which I pity them sincerely, of the men who were in the rear guarding the baggage; but it would be, or rather it will be, unjust to decorate them with the same badge of honor for walking alongside a camel, as they do Oakfield for saving a color."

"What was that? what was that?" said Mr. Middleton; "why did you never mention it? I never heard a word about it."

"Did you not?" said Stanton. "Of course not, though, for Oakfield was, I believe, your only correspondent, and I know you were not likely to hear it from him."

He looked kindly at his friend as he spoke, and with an honorable pleasure told the story. Mr. Middleton looked much pleased. "This is delightful," he said, "the very most desirable epilogue to your court-martial, my dear boy."

"Just what I told him," said Stanton, "but his court-martial had another epilogue besides that"; — and he related the account of Stafford's death, which made them all silent for some time.

"What were we talking about?" Stanton presently resumed. "O, medals! — well, I was going to say that people abuse the old Duke now-a-days, for being, as they say, stingy,

and ungracious about medals; for my part I think it is just like the man, that is to say, wise and admirable. He knows exactly what an action is, few men better; and knows, therefore, that to give medals promiscuously to all who were present, is to give them very undeservedly in some cases, and very much diminished in value in others; and knowing this, I do love the profound indifference with which the grand old man listens to the foolish ravings of thousands of people, who, as he is perfectly well aware, know just exactly nothing about the matter."

"I like to hear you speak like that of the Duke," said Mr. Middleton; "an Englishman, and especially an officer, presuming, as so many do now-a-days, to affect to speak depreciatingly and disrespectfully of him, is to me one of the most offensive things I know."

"I think so too," said Oakfield; "he is a very obelisk of a man in these latter days, a giant among pigmies, one of the few eminent signs left to show what an unconquerable will, an entire-hearted man, can do."

"I am half inclined to agree with you, Stanton," said Mr. Middleton, "about medals, but I confess I have thought more about that which is now-a-days the usual concomitant of medals; I mean batta; — and I consider the principle on which that is granted most thoroughly detestable."

"Well, but what do you suppose *is* the principle?"

"I know," answered Mr. Middleton, "that it professes, not to be a remuneration for fighting, but a compensation for camp expenses; in wise adaptation to which theory a very large sum is given to those who can best afford to defray those expenses, and *vice versâ*. But I appeal to your considerable experience, whether you have ever found your campaigns so expensive, that without batta they would have greatly involved you?"

"No, certainly not; O, I quite agree with you; and

even if they had, I should think batta false in principle. The notion of the state paying the expenses of individuals, as well as its own, is monstrous. I believe Cabul was an exceptional case; and as government, in a foolish war, brought an army for no purpose into a country where all things were at starvation prices, it was perhaps just that they should pay for their folly. But I admit that batta, on its present, and now, it seems, habitual footing, is low, unchivalrous, and worthy of a people of shopkeepers. To degrade war to such a very mercenary level is also, I fear, as Oakfield would say, symptomatic of the age."

"I think so, certainly," said Oakfield; "fancy England or France, or any of the great powers in the last war, taking upon them, in addition to their other burdens, to give six months' batta to their armies!"

Breakfast over, Mr. Middleton went to his court, where he was occupied until five in the evening. To Stanton and Oakfield it was a great lounge, after a long camp life, to lie on a sofa again, with the range of (for India) a very good library. At five o'clock Mr. Middleton came in, and found both his friends asleep on their respective couches. They formed a strange contrast. Stanton's rough brown hair and moustache and *beard*, upon which, according to a prevailing fashion of the army, he had suffered no razor to come since the commencement of the campaign, partly concealed, but could not altogether disguise, the strong lines of his quiescent face. In that calm, square forehead, those features which, though so rough, look as if cut in stone, so unmoved are they, especially the firm lines of his mouth, one of those mouths for which nature has, in the first place, done enough, and then as it were left it to the man himself whether it shall be good or bad, whether those thick lips shall droop into sensual hideousness, or be gathered up into the solidity of strength; his face altogether indicates much self-conquest;

it is the countenance of a man who, though young in years, has passed the crisis of life and settled down into the comparative serenity of self-knowledge, self-reliance, self-subjugation; — but Mr. Middleton found his gaze fixed more and longer on Oakfield. If in the other physiognomy there was more matter for congratulation, perhaps — in its placid strength — for admiration, yet this more called for sympathy. Not only for the appearance of ill health, though that is sadly visible; the sunk face, so grave, yet so clear; the hollow eye; the shrunk form; the painful breathing; these symptoms startled and shocked Mr. Middleton, who had not observed them when the features were lighted up with animation, as they had been in the morning. But there was more than the signs of ill health to sympathize with. If in Stanton's face the traces of conflict past were visible, here might be seen those of conflict present. The delicacy of skin seemed to indicate a corresponding delicacy within, that shrank continually from the battle which duty still rendered necessary. There is a look of anxiety, of restlessness, that seems to speak of a perpetual jarring within of discordant elements, of a painful struggle between strength and weakness, which seems to say that poor Oakfield has not found peace yet, any more than when he talked to Margaret on Dunmail Raise.

Mr. Middleton stood still at the entrance of the room, making these observations. He would not disturb them, so proceeded to take a book, intending to read till one of them chose to wake. He was not so quiet, however, in moving across the room, but that Stanton, with the quick ear of an old soldier recently exercised, heard him, and started up.

"Hallo, Middleton, is that you? By Jove, I think I have been asleep."

"I think you have."

"How long have you been here? Why did n't you wake me?"

"I have only just come in: but I did n't intend to wake you. I thought very likely you might have arrears of sleep to work off: but don't let us talk loud, for poor Oakfield there does n't seem inclined to wake. Don't you think, Stanton," he added, dropping his voice, "he looks very ill?"

"I do really; I was quite uneasy about him at Lahore the other day; he ought to go to the hills directly."

"He 'll have to go to England, I suspect, before he has done. The sea is the only thing that ever thoroughly drives that color out of a man's cheeks. Well, which of you gentlemen am I to drive to-night? We can't all three go in the buggy."

"O, drive Oakfield, then: I sha'n't go out: or you can lend me a horse."

"I can very easily do that."

So it was arranged. In about an hour's time, a little before sunset, Oakfield woke up, with much the same shrewd observation which Stanton had made; and which, indeed, most people make, who go to sleep in the daytime, as a kind of apology to themselves for having been guilty of such an impropriety; just in time to bathe, dress, and go out on the course with Mr. Middleton. It was curious to Oakfield being back on the Ferozepore course, after a six months' interval, which seemed like years. How much had happened in those six months! His journey to Simla and back, and all the excitement of the campaign, which had of itself been such a completely strange and new chapter in his life; his court-martial seemed to belong to a past age. As he was thus musing, Stanton rode up alongside: "I say, Oakfield, was n't it on this road you had your adventure with the great Straddles?"

"Yes, just by the tree there, about a hundred yards ahead. Poor Straddles! I don't like to think of that business; he was a great fool, to be sure."

"Preserve me from my commiserators," said Mr. Middleton, laughing.

"No, no; I did n't mean to say that, either; upon my word, I am very sorry when I think of poor Straddles, and poor Stafford, too!"

His countenance fell. Ferozepore, and his encounter on the very spot which they were now driving over, recalled associations that ill agreed with his last impressions of Stafford.

"Don't talk any more about that business," he said, lying back in the buggy; "it was a bad one at best, and I would rather forget it."

"Well, I quite understand your feeling on the subject," said Mr. Middleton; "don't you, Stanton?"

"Humph," replied that gruff gentleman, with his favorite prefatory ejaculation, "well, perhaps I do," and galloped off.

"Stanton hates any allusion to feelings," observed Oakfield; "well, it is a wise antipathy."

"He will respect yours, though, you may depend upon it," said Mr. Middleton.

"O, I know that; I know he will never open his lips on the subject again. Good old fellow! Now, if I was in his place, I should make ten resolutions to his one, and — not through unkindness, but infirmity — keep them about a tenth part as well. He is one of the few men I know whose resolution is as good as his performance; one is so perfectly certain to follow the other."

"Very true; but he has reached that state through a severe discipline, you may be sure. I like to watch him now; his seat on his horse has a characteristic force in it. I am convinced the animal must feel a magnetic consciousness that Stanton intends to be master, and will certainly be so, under all circumstances. Hah! is not that Perkins, of your regiment, on the gray horse?"

"Yes, to be sure. Well, Perkins, good evening; do you march to-morrow?"

"O no; halt here a couple of days more. How do you do, Mr. Middleton, glad to see you again."

The usual civilities passed between them, and Mr. Middleton asked him to dinner. Perkins would have been most happy, but unfortunately he was the officer of the day. He would, however, gallop back to camp, and if he could get another officer to take his duty for him, would come up to dinner; so off he went.

"Great good in that man, too," said Mr. Middleton, looking after him, "though in a sufficiently different style from Stanton."

"Great good in all men, I begin to think," answered Oakfield.

"Why, that is rather a new line for you to come out in, Oakfield; you used rather to lament the universal delinquency."

"And might still, for we are all fearful delinquents, but the campaign taught me, amongst other things, and I am thankful to it for the lesson, to be more catholic-minded. I was quite surprised with the good (in many different styles, as you say) which a little hardship and work drew out of men whom I own I had always thought good for nothing."

"I can well believe it; it is a good lesson; believe it, I advise you, when tempted, as you will be, to forget or deny it. To a thoughtful man, the enormous evil in the world is so patent that it is superfluous to dwell on it; the good which is better worth knowing is latent, and in many cases, it must be owned, cruelly hard to find."

They drove home, and in about half an hour they were joined by Stanton and Perkins, who had effected an amiable compromise regarding the night picquets with the Adjutant. They had a pleasant evening.

The month of April in that part of India is very bearable, and in a well-arranged house very comfortable. The doors had been hermetically sealed all the day, and when the sun was down, and they were thrown open to the fresh air, not yet irremediably baked through by the long day's sunshine as in May and June, the house was so cool that a punkah was not required.

The glass and silver glittered pleasantly in the lamp-light on the snow-white table-cloth; the dinner was — to men accustomed to campaign fare — luxurious, and Perkins was justified in assuring his friends at mess the next evening, that "old Middleton had a very good idea of making himself comfortable; — the dinner was good, and the iced simkin,* sir, delicious." Perkins talked away in his own amusing, self-confident, free and easy style, dilated on the campaign of course, had a tolerable store of anecdotes connected with it, complained bitterly of the 90th not having been sent with the pursuing force, and indeed any soldier might well regret having missed that glorious and exciting expedition.

In three days the regiment marched. Oakfield remained behind; not to remain long, however, for the very day before his corps left, he appeared before a medical committee, upon the recommendation of his crusty but skilful friend, McGrowdy, and received a sick certificate to Simla till 1st November, 1849. The sun was getting hotter every day, and he felt it becoming more and more injurious to him, so he left Ferozepore without delay, on the 20th of April, to travel by dawk to Simla. He had no such unpleasant rainy adventures as had marked his last journey in September; the only event, if it may be so called, was his passing, near Loodiana, the train of wagons with the wounded men, European and native, of the late battles, journeying slowly,

* *Simkin, — quasi* Hindustanee for Champagne.

march by march, towards the invalid depôt at Landour. It was a ghastly sight, those squalid faces and thin bodies; some were evidently suffering excruciating pain from the jolting of these rough vehicles; the effects of war, with the excitement off and the chill on, are an awful spectacle. "Poor fellows," thought Oakfield, as he looked at them, "I doubt very much whether you individually get your fair share of the honor and glory in these affairs, at all equivalent to your share of the pains and perils"; with which radical cogitation he passed sadly on, musing upon the Peace Society then just beginning to agitate in England; but not even the carts he had just seen could reconcile him to their doctrines. "So long," thought he, "as there are worse evils in the world than gunshot and bayonet wounds, universal peace is a doctrine not to be preached without qualification. I have just seen some of the physical evils of war, but I must not forget its moral good effects, which I as certainly witnessed in the case of the officers of the 90th."

He reached Simla better than he had expected, though exhausted by the journey. He found Wykham in his old house, and went and took up his quarters with him as before. Wykham was quite recovered, but still adhering to his resolution of taking his furlough in the cold weather. It may be fancied what a theme of conversation this was to them, though rather a sad one to poor Oakfield, who, however, still found a fascination in it, and almost tired Wykham by constantly recurring to it. Wykham lived in London; his friends, he said, were living in the same street, in the same house, that they had done ever since he could remember. Except that two sisters had been born during his absence, whose acquaintance he had yet to make, his family circle remained exactly as it had been when he left, so that his prospects in returning to England were really happy; so happy that Oakfield, with his nervous distrust of Nemesis,

wondered he could contemplate, or at least speak of them, without trembling. He was much struck by the increased gravity of Wykham's manner. There was the same joyous cheerfulness, which sat on him even more gracefully that it seemed now to play lightly over a ground of more becoming and restful gravity. His wound and illness, perhaps too his previous intercourse with Oakfield, had made him think; with all his lightsomeness undiminished, he appeared to have a more distinct consciousness of the solemnity of life. Oakfield saw, or at least felt, this change, and found himself more closely drawn than ever to his friend. He remarked upon it, in his letters to Stanton, but got, what he half expected, a *quasi* reproof in that quarter. "If you make Wykham as grave as yourself," wrote this uncourteous correspondent, "you will spoil a very good fellow; — sweets to the sweet, gravity to the grave, frolic to the frolicsome." Oakfield wrote back a protest, in which he expressed himself better: "Wykham is not spoilt, but much improved: he is graver than he was; still frolicsome, but serious: and I will not think any human being the worse, but much the better, for having a broad foundation of seriousness, which the lightest spirits may gracefully illuminate. Playfulness on the top of the seriousness is not only a charm to others, but it is the wise secret of life. Without this it is mere folly and grimacing; graceful in a boy, as in a kitten; but intolerable in a man. Wykham has been a playfully graceful boy; he is now a wisely sportive man."

To this Stanton assented.

"Do you look forward much to going home yourself, Oakfield?" Wykham asked one evening, in the course of the ride.

"Does a cat like milk? You must be mocking my misfortune; fancy not looking forward to it!"

"Well, I never did, till quite lately; till in fact I was ad-

vised to go. I used to say to myself I should probably go home some day, but never dwelt upon it, or built castles, as many men do; it always seemed so distant."

"I should be very sorry," said Oakfield, "not to dwell upon it, and build castles; sorry to lose the softening influence of a prospect so made up of pleasure and pain. I often observe that the best men in this country are those who like it least."

"I should n't have thought it did any man much good to hate the country he has to live in."

"Why not? There is a strict analogy in the highest sense of goodness. The good man is he who loves earth the least, and has the greatest desire to leave it."

"Why, after all," said Wykham, "it does n't much matter to you and me, because we have nothing to do, and so it is of no importance whether we like it or not; but a man who has hard work to do surely does it better for liking the country he has to do it in."

"That sounds true, Wykham, but really I believe you will find that practically it is not the case. Besides, my analogy is against you still, and I think it is a fair one. Few men worked more vigorously in their day than Paul; yet who so much longed to depart and be with Christ, which was far better? So in a very much lower, but strictly analogous sense, men out here may even be desirous to depart and be with those they love best on earth, and yet work none the less vigorously, but the more so, so long as it is profitable for them to remain: their vigor is not lessened by this home longing, at least it certainly need not be; and on the other hand, in this country, where the affections are too apt to grow cold, nothing is so softening, so calculated to keep them alive. Besides, why waste time in finding reasons to justify our natural affections? their existence is their justification: look too at individual cases, — at Middleton."

"Middleton! you don't mean to say he is troubled with home longings? I should have thought he cared for nothing but cutcherry."

"Then you never formed a more erroneous opinion of a man in your life. Since his sister has come out, he has said less, and I dare say felt less, on the subject, but I know he still looks forward to going home as the great event of his life."

"Going home for good?"

"No: Middleton would not do that as long as his health lasts. There again he would feel bound to give his service to the country so long as he could usefully and profitably do so."

"I don't see how he is *bound* to stay after serving his time."

"Not bound, of course, legally; but Middleton is too good a man to view his duty by the light of human compulsions. Having deliberately adopted this country as a working field for his lifetime, he feels (he has told me all this) that he is bound to stay at his post, working as long as he can. He does not recognize the theory of a man earning idleness. Of course there is a time when faculties begin to fail; and when the close of life draws upon a man, he may perhaps lawfully rest awhile before the end; but to abandon his work in the prime of life and health and faculty, requires, he thinks, a better reason to justify it before God, than having a certain number of pounds a year."

"It would rather astonish the senior officers of the service to tell them that their having enough to live upon was no reason for going. Fancy our old Major being told that he had no right to take 30,000 rupees from us for his step, and go home!"

"I fancy, Wykham, the senior officers might be, as you say, very considerably astonished in many ways, could they

be persuaded for a moment to realize the fact that an income did not fix the limits of man's duties and movements; but your *reductio ad absurdum* (for such I suppose you meant that speech to be) fails you; of course, to apply true principles to a conclusion whose premises have been grounded on false ones, gives an absurd result."

"Steady, old fellow, steady! don't come the Oxford man quite so severely!"

Oakfield laughed.

"Well, but look here: you apply what I said, or rather what Middleton said, about retiring, and so on, to the case of a man who has been serving all his time in the mere spirit of worldliness, and of course the combination of a worldly twenty-five years, with a spiritual idea tacked on at the end, is merely ludicrous. It is a common fallacy, and one which is apt, I think, to puzzle us all, till we detect it. I have heard men try to make what they call religion ridiculous, by attributing some so-called religious act or speech to a notoriously worldly, careless man. Of course the result is absurd, as real inconsistency always is; and therefore people are too apt carelessly to attach the absurdity to the isolated religious act, whereas it consists only in its apparent connection with years of iniquity. The incongruity is as ludicrous as the motley of a fool; red need not be an absurd color for a dress, nor blue; but blue and red in contiguity are so. That is the reason why men find it so difficult to get from wrong to right. They are conscious that the change involves an inconsistency, an absurdity; and wrongly attribute this to the right which they wish to do."

"Give an instance, and I shall understand you better."

"Why, I will take one of the strongest possible instances; a man gets into a passion, insults — say strikes — another, and is challenged by the man he has aggrieved. In a cooler temper he regrets his passion, and thinks it wrong to fight.

But to allege this conviction now exposes him to the reasonable charge of hypocrisy and cowardice. The inconsistency here is not only absurd, but odious. In nine cases of ten he will shrink from the absurdity and the odium, and fight; thereby avoiding the inconsistency by a wicked integrity; but if he had been wise, he would have seen that the inconsistency was the painful consequence of his first sin; that there was nothing odious or hypocritical in his refusal to fight; that that was still right, still his duty. Duty is not foolish, cannot be so; only looks so when set in striking juxtaposition with neglect or breach of duty. This is only in the collocation. No man can turn from wrong to right without paying the tax of inconsistency, and risking the charge of hypocrisy; the more flagrant the former wrong, the heavier the tax, the greater the charge. To the habitually conscientious man every lapse from duty involves this struggle and this charge, self-made if by no other."

"That is a hard case, you suppose?" said Wykham, musingly.

"Very, but possible."

"Do you think that, under these circumstances, a man would really be wrong in fighting?"

"As wrong as Herod was in killing John the Baptist, to save his consistency."

"But consider the fearful weight with which the charge of hypocrisy would fall in such a case."

"Fearful, certainly; a martyrdom if you like, but one which a man should prefer to sin, even as he should the actual martyrdom unto death."

"You have the best of it in theory, certainly."

"And the only thing which makes you lay the stress on *theory*, Wykham, is the difficulty of practice; but a thing is not the less right or wrong for being difficult. Well, but that was an instance of what I meant, when I spoke of the

fallacy of applying a true conclusion to false premises. Now, in Middleton's case, the premises have been eminently true. He has lived all his life in the fear of God, doing his duty, not to man, but to God: you can fancy no absurdity in the end of such a man's service being calculated on other than worldly principles. He has felt a consciousness of right and wrong, duty and sin, every day through twenty years of service: it is not wonderful that he should retain this consciousness in one particular act, is it? So I think he looks forward as much as you or I do to visiting home, as an oasis in what can never be a happy life."

"Never, — do you think? Well, I don't think so: I think we get on very well."

"Very well; but not happily. I do not think exile can ever be happy. And there are other drawbacks not acutely painful, but of a chronic nature, that make our life out here a wholesomely sad one, in my opinion."

"You mean the climate?"

"That for one thing: the ugliness of the country is another."

"Simla is beautiful."

"But we do not live at Simla; and I think the utter hideousness of the plains is painful and deteriorating, unless guarded against."

"You mean that the mind has a tendency to become as blank as the country?"

"Something like that: well, then, there are the natives."

"Brutes!" ejaculated the other.

"Wykham, Wykham!" Oakfield said, reproachfully.

"Well, I do detest the natives; they are a mean, lying, fawning, sordid race; and after ten years' experience, I say that to call a native 'a man and a brother,' is a lie. He is not a man; and I repudiate the fraternity of a scoundrel who lies at every other word."

"My experience is much less than yours, and I grant you their lying is most awful; but then this is just one of the evils which I say weigh upon us in this country. It is grievous to live among men, and feel the idea of fraternity thwarted by facts; and yet the idea must not be abandoned as false or hopeless. We must not resign ourselves, without a struggle, to calling them brutes."

"I think we may call them what they are."

"Yes, but be sure of what they are first; you know yourself that there are many good points in the natives."

"But what do you say in defence of their lying? you shirk that."

"It is hard to know what to say; nothing to defend it, certainly; but then, I believe, they lie a great deal less than we suppose."

"We must suppose they lie infinitely then, for no supposition within finite bounds can exceed the truth."

"Do you like your servants?" Oakfield asked by way of answer.

"Well, I certainly like them better than any other natives; but then I flatter myself they are a good set; they have been with me too for a long time."

"And yet you will find that I think *mine* a good set; and almost every man thinks *his* a good set, and likes his own servants much better than any other natives."

"Well, what then?"

"Why this, at least, that they improve upon acquaintance, and that we abuse those least whom we are best qualified to pronounce upon."

Wykham laughed. "You have me in a trap; but, as Galileo remarked, 'they *lie* still!'"

"Rather unfair to represent poor Galileo as the pertinacious holder of a prejudice; he introduced the new system, recollect. 'They still are better than you think, still men,

still souls': this is what he would shout, this new doctrine, yet as old as the fact of the earth going round the sun in itself. The fact is not new, but only our knowledge of it."

"You merely assert this; Galileo could prove his new fact."

"It would have existed even if he had not proved it. I consider the fact we agreed to just now is part proof. We esteem them the better, the more we know them. Why? because we learn to look at things from their view, instead of arrogantly assuming our own as the true one, and condemning them for not coming up to it. So if we knew them well (which, remember, neither you nor I do), we should find them men even as we are, looking at truth from a different point of view, and a much worse one, which is their misfortune; but still their view is as honest as ours, and in some things as sufficient."

"I trust there is no point of view from which you can so discern truth as to consider it venial to lie."

"I am sure you exaggerate the lying of the natives, Wykham. You and I could not get on with our servants in every-day life, if truth was not far more habitual to them than falsehood. For all you say of their lying, you believe much the greater part of what they say; but allowing that lying is a national vice, and a detestable one, they might retaliate. It is quite conceivable that a good Brahmin, if you can find such an one, shall be as disgusted at our national drunkenness (for, judging from our soldiers, they will call it a national vice) as we are at their national falsehood. But after all, I grant freely that they are a deplorably inferior race; but I do not see why they should be considered hopelessly so. I know they have souls; and I believe their souls to be as glorious and majestic as yours or mine, though perhaps more terribly hampered. But I grant freely, Wykham, that it is much easier to say all this than to believe and

act upon it; indeed, this latter is so hard as to constitute, as I said, one of the drawbacks to happiness in India. To overlook the merely artificial distinctions of rank and money is difficult, as we see by every day's experience in Europe; how much more the real distinctions of color and language."

"And do you think that we are bound to overlook these distinctions, which you yourself allow to be real?"

"I do; depend upon it, he approaches the nearest to wisdom who advances farthest in self-restrained liberty; and every barrier that is removed, every distinction that is merged in a growing sense of unity, is an approach to a higher liberty. There is only one real, permanent distinction, that is, between good and evil; within this there are a million others, some absolutely wrong, some venial, some even desirable as expedients, but all defective, all temporary; we should be ever trying to get rid of them all, one by one. We shall have never finished this work on earth, but the approach to it is the course of truth."

Such conversations became frequent between Oakfield and Wykham. Those who had long known the latter were struck by the change in him; and yet, although he rather withdrew from society, and became fonder and fonder of Oakfield every day, preferring his company to all other, yet all would have confirmed the truth of Oakfield's saying, that his lightsomeness was not gone, not diminished really, though you could not but be conscious that it traversed a more serious background than formerly. They were both much occupied in reading. They read Shakespeare together. Oakfield had commenced his long-purposed course of French and German study. One morning in August, he was thus engaged in his own room; Wykham was out; he always went out before breakfast, and was generally the bearer of letters from the post on his return. While Oakfield was engaged in trying to set straight a more than ordinarily com-

plicated sentence of his complicated but now much-loved *Deutsch*, he heard the sound of his friend's horse as he galloped up at a pace that indicated eagerness, and in an instant Wykham himself rushed into the room with two or three letters in his hand, but holding also one already opened, and exclaimed, —

"News! Oakfield, news! no, I sha'n't give you your letter, or you 'll see in a moment. Guess!"

"Anybody I know?"

"Yes."

"Ah, I know."

"What, what? I don't believe you do."

"Ferozepore?" asked Oakfield.

A nod.

"Stanton?"

Another nod.

"Going to be married?"

"By Jove, yes! how came you to guess that?"

"I have been half expecting it for some months past. Miss Middleton, of course?"

"Of course."

"Well, it is one of the most entirely happy things I have heard for a long time."

"Yes; but just fancy that surly old ruffian proposing! Well, he 'll be in decent order henceforth, that 's one comfort; I should think Miss Middleton would soon break him in. She 's not a girl to stand his 'humph' long, I 'm pretty certain."

"Come, come, Fred," said Oakfield, "keep a civil tongue in your head and give me my letters."

"It 's rather a bore," said Wykham, without noticing this last request, "your having guessed it. I meant to have some fun out of you; what a sharp look-out you keep under that demure, speculative look of yours, Master Oakfield! How long is it since you noticed anything?"

"Fred, I see you want a good bit of gossip; and I can just tell you that you won't get it. You have called me demure too, a word I hate; I shall resent it by telling you nothing; come, — letters."

"What do you want?" said Wykham, as Oakfield stretched out his hand, — "O, I forgot your letters. Well, here 's one from Stanton, ditto to mine I fancy, and here 's one I can't make out, for it has the Simla postmark and is 'Private Service.'"

"Do give me my letters, you regular old Mrs. Mailsetter. Look here, Wykham," he added laughing, after reading Stanton's letter, "he agrees with me, you see."

Stanton's epistle was characteristic."

"Dear Oakfield: —

"I am engaged to be married. Fred will be astonished; you, I fancy, less so. You are deeper than you would care to be thought, I suspect. I detected a look of yours once or twice, at Ferozepore, which would have done credit to any old lady gossip of the station. Fan sends her kind regards to you. Of course you understand it is Miss Middleton I am going to marry.

"Most affectionately yours,

"H. Stanton."

"P. S. — Don't let that griff Wykham go and chatter about this all over Simla."

"Griff indeed!" said Wykham in high dudgeon.

"O murder!" said Oakfield, "I forgot the postscript; bear up, Fred: you must own it was a needful caution."

"A caution wanted most for the old lady gossip sort of observers," retaliated Wykham; then added, with a comical seriousness, "I must never trust a serious man again: I find them impostors."

Oakfield did not hear this last speech; he was engaged in reading his second letter. It seemed short, but engrossing all his attention notwithstanding.

"Just read this," he said, handing the note to Wykham.

It was an important document; a demi-official note from the Governor-General's private secretary, stating that the fact of his having saved one of the colors of his regiment from falling into the hands of the enemy at Chillianwalla had been brought to the favorable notice of the government, and informing him, finally, that he had been appointed an Assistant Commissioner in the newly annexed territory of the Punjab.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Wykham, as he heard this; "I congratulate you most heartily, my boy; I knew they must do something for you. Do you like the notion of civil employ?"

"Yes," said Oakfield, who still sat back in his chair in a musing fit; "yes, I think I do."

"Think you do! that 's a cool way for an ensign to talk when he gets a civil appointment flung at his head."

Oakfield smiled. "Very good of the flingers, certainly, Fred; but it 's a queer thing, is n't it?"

"What 's queer? What a fellow you are, Oakfield! I know, if I had an appointment offered me, I should n't stop to consider what there was queer in it."

"No, but don't you think it *is* an odd thing, to reward a military service — to call mine such — with a civil appointment? I wonder if they ever give a good magistrate a commission in the army!"

"Oakfield, you are an ungrateful dog, and I shall write a civil refusal for you."

"It is too bad upon my word, but the oddity of it would occur to me for the moment. Refusal? No, Fred, I shall instantly write a most grateful acceptance."

He did accordingly, and showed it to Wykham.

"Well, you are gracious enough on paper, certainly; let me add a postscript to say you were laughing at and abus-

ing them for offering it just before you wrote. Do you know, Oakfield, I begin to think you are an extremely artful dodger."

"Come, Fred, gently; who dodged up to the hills for four seasons running? Four years in the hills, and the fifth in England! O Fred, Fred! blush if you have any bowels of compassion for poor John Company, whom you have so scandalously defrauded of service."

"Defrauded! I scorn the imputation. Have I not lived in India for them, worn their uniform, commanded their black troopers, devoted a fraction of one of my valuable legs to them? And if I had defrauded them, I fancy John has bowels enough of his own without indenting on me. But I say, Oakfield, let us have a look at you; well, now do you know you *have* rather the air of a civil officer?"

Oakfield laughed, but he had much to think of; Stanton's engagement, his own so suddenly altered prospects, had to be considered quietly, and, as Wykham was evidently not in a quiet vein, he withdrew to his own room, where in the course of the morning he wrote two long letters, one to his mother and another to Stanton.

The next month and a half were spent in great peace and enjoyment at Simla, but October was to all the three friends a most eventful month. Oakfield received official intimation of his appointment to Lahore; he had entertained some hopes of being sent to Ferozepore, but of course could not expect it. On the 15th of October, however, both he and Wykham were present at Mr. Middleton's house at Ferozepore, at Stanton's wedding, and the same evening Wykham started for Calcutta, *en route* to England.

"Don't forget to go to Leatheburn within six weeks of your arrival," were nearly the last words Oakfield said to him.

"I think not," said Wykham; "nor to write you a full account of my arrival there. Good by, my dear Oakfield," he said in an altered tone; "thank you, and God bless you."

While Oakfield was still meditating on that word "thank you," the palki was lifted up, and the homeward-bound journey was begun.

"So it is," soliloquized Oakfield, "Stanton married, and half separated from me: Wykham gone to England, and I must go to my strange, untried work alone. But what a fool and worse I am to talk like this! Am I a child that I must have my friends to hold me up through life? Besides, thank Heaven, there is Middleton still left."

"Thank you for that kind word, dear Edward," said Mr. Middleton, who came up behind him, and was an unintentional listener to this sentence; "come, I know your thoughts, it happens to us all in India. My heart seems rather desolate to-day, but I can thank God for it notwithstanding."

They shook hands cordially, and entered the house.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Here on our native soil we breathe once more;
The cock that crows, the smoke that curls, that sound
Of bells, those boys who in yon meadow-ground
In white-sleeved shirts are playing, and the roar
Of the waves breaking on the chalky shore,—
All, all are English."

WORDSWORTH.

WE trust the reader will not be unwilling to return to Leatheburn. It is the beginning of February, in 1850. Four years have passed since we last accompanied the Oakfields to Lodore, and marked changes have come over some of the party; no rude revolutionary changes, however, none but what have been wrought by the gentle process of growth and gradual development. Mrs. Oakfield is the one on whom the lapse of time seems to have impressed its mark the least; her dark hair still shines as brightly as then: her soft face is still as lovable as ever: her eyes beam as tenderly when she smiles upon her children. Neither is Margaret much changed: she is in the very bloom of youthful womanhood, just two-and-twenty: the whole party seem to lean towards and depend upon her, much as they used to do: nor is there any diminution perceptible in her willing joy at serving and pleasing others. Rose and Mary are now nine and ten years old; both as pretty as they promised to be: Rose, as of old, takes the lead: her unflagging spirits, more than her years of seniority, giving her the command over the more sedate little Mary. But it is a kind

rule. Margaret is their teacher, their playmate: beginning even thus early to be their friend and companion. Herby is the most changed: he is now sixteen, *in tails*, a prefect at Winchester, his holidays just drawing to a close; but he stands this time, so trying to body and mind, well. Of course he is not free from all its physical disagreeables: the queer changes in his voice, from squeak to growl, make Rose and Mary and even Margaret laugh at times. They *like* the squeak, for it seems the last relic (no pleasing one, it must be owned, in fact, however delightful to the imagination) of childhood: of course Herbert himself prefers the more manly growl. There is too about him some of the awkwardness which invariably attends the transition from boyhood to incipient manhood: an assumed dignity, with the least possible tinge of swagger in it, is sometimes perceptible to those who watch him closely; but he is full of boyish fun still; very kind to his sisters; and as fond of his mother as when he was a little child. He walks about by himself a good deal now, spends afternoons on the side of Helvellyn, with his fishing-rod; he is fortunate to have hills and streams and rocks to bestow his idleness upon. He is as romantic as Edward was before him; writes verses, which he shows to Margaret: he is sixteen, so probably in love. He certainly does find the time hang a little heavy now and then, especially just at the end of the holidays, when, like the juvenile so admirably depicted in *Punch*, "he has read all the books in the house." One great resource for him is to walk down, about eleven o'clock, to the inn, and see the mail change. He is a great friend of both the coachman and guards, and knows exactly their respective days for working up and down. It is on the 3d of February, 1850, that we introduce Herby, again, sauntering down by the lake-side towards the King's Head.

He found the four horses waiting in a shed, in readiness

for the change, but the mail had not yet appeared in sight, although the first point from which it became visible was nearly a mile off. Presently, however, Herby descried the dark object just coming in sight over the brow of the hill, and communicated the fact to his friend the ostler, who thereupon brought out his team into the road. Both the ostler and Herby watched the mail with great interest as it from time to time disappeared and again emerged from among the trees and windings of the road.

"A poor load to-day," said the former, "I only see one upon the roof."

Suddenly the loud blast of the horn was heard: the mail dashed round the last obscuring corner, came at a fast trot down the gentle declivity, and pulled up in most scientific style at the door of the King's Head. Herby was too much occupied in gazing at the mail itself, his darling object, watching the change of horses, and talking to his friend the coachman, to pay much attention to the solitary passenger on the box. The passenger, however, got down: this was nothing; he probably got down for a change; but Herby was surprised when he heard him ask the guard to get his portmanteau out of the boot; it was almost the first time that he had ever seen any passenger, except himself or one of his own family, get down at the King's Head. He began to observe the new arrival more attentively, as he dived into the boot to instruct the guard which portmanteau belonged to him, and which to the old gentleman inside.

The stranger was a young man, apparently less than thirty, with dark, rather curly hair, very bright brown eyes, and a pleasant, rather laughing countenance. He was dressed in a black paletot; but as he got down, Herby observed, across his arm, instead of the dark brown great-coat, which is as usual a concomitant of the English gentleman on his travels as a Mackintosh was once, and as a portman-

teau and carpet-bag are now, a huge blue cloak, lined with red, with brass buttons. This appendage, together with his black, curly moustache, might have suggested to Herbert that he was a soldier, even had he not heard the coachman, when acknowledging an apparently liberal donation, say, "Thank you, Captain: good morning, sir."

While Herby was still wondering what on earth this person — captain, or whatever he was — could be wanting at Leatheburn, looking out in vain for some gun-case or fishing-rod, whose connection with the grouse of Helvellyn, or the trout of the Red Tarn, might solve the mystery, he heard him ask the coachman, "Can you tell me whereabouts Mrs. Oakfield lives?"

"Here's a young gentleman as I dare say can tell you," replied the coachman, pointing to Herby, who said (a little awkwardly, but with polite intention), "I shall be happy to show you the way up to Leatheburn."

The stranger started as he turned and looked at his offered guide, but accepted his offer readily, and, after one last look from Herby at the mail, they started off on the little path through the wood.

"I am lucky in having so good a guide," said the unknown, after they had gone about a mile through the twistings of a beautiful but very intricate wood, "I should never have found the path by myself."

"Why, no," said Herbert, rather proudly, "this is the short cut, which I fancy you could not have found: the regular path is easy enough, lower down by the lake there."

"You seem to know it well."

"I ought to, I have lived here all my life."

"I beg your pardon if I am wrong," said the other; "but surely, I think you must be Herbert."

Herby started.

"How on earth did you know that?" he said; "I never saw you, did I?"

"Probably not; I certainly never saw you."

Herby looked quite puzzled; but there was something so good-natured in his companion's laughing eyes as he enjoyed his amazement, that he felt encouraged to join in the joke, though generally rather reserved and shy of strangers.

"Do you always guess people's names before you see them?"

"I did n't guess yours; I knew it."

"And yet you never saw me, nor any of us," pointing, as he spoke, to the house, which just became visible on the opposite side of a deep bay of the lake, at one horn of which they now emerged from their wooded path.

"No, none of you up there, certainly, though I hope soon to have the pleasure of doing so; but I was never in this part of the world before, and a most lovely part it is."

"Is it not?" said Herby, forgetting his wonder in his readily-stirred enthusiasm about his beloved Cumberland; "well, but about this; I give it up."

His companion laughed heartily. "I will tell you more," he said; "you are at Winchester."

"Yes," said Herby, now quite resigned; "go on."

"You have three sisters?"

"Yes."

"One older and two younger?"

"This is getting awful," said Herby, in a tone of affected terror.

"You have an elder brother?"

"Yes."

"Called Edward?"

"Yes."

"In the Indian army?"

"Yes."

"Very like you in the face, and about the best fellow that ever lived."

"Ah!" exclaimed Herby, "you know Ned?"

"I am proud to say I rather do know Ned; and I hope Ned has told you that he knows Fred Wykham?"

"Oh!" said Herby, "how stupid of me not to guess! Why he told us we might expect to see you some time in February; how very odd my meeting you in this way!" Then assuming, to a slight extent, the acting head of the family, he added, "Allow me to welcome you to Leatheburn, Captain Wykham."

"Thank you," said the other, shaking heartily his extended hand, "but don't introduce me to your mother as 'Captain' Wykham, please."

"Why not? what are you?"

"Only 'Mr.' I fear; unless the junior captain and five senior lieutenants have disappeared since the date of my last accounts from the regiment."

"Well, but I heard the coachman call you 'Captain.'"

"Ah! that you see was a brevet he kindly gave me; he found out as we came along that I was in the army, and seemed to take such pleasure in be-captaining me, that it would have been cruel to undeceive him. O how very beautiful!" he suddenly exclaimed, as a bend brought immediately to view the whole length of the fairy-like lake, with its magnificent boundaries, — Helvellyn, Raven Crag, — in the remoter distance, Blencathra and Skiddaw, — and in the immediate foreground the Oakfields' house, not more than a hundred yards from them.

"I'll just run on," said Herby, "and tell my mother you're coming; unless," he added, archly, "you wish to make experiments upon them as you did on me."

"No, no; quite right: better run on; I'll wait here till I see you coming back to meet me."

So Herby ran off to the house, burst into the drawing-room, and with a somewhat startling abruptness announced,

"Mother, a visitor"; this message seemed hardly worthy of the excitement with which it was announced. — "A friend of Edward's from India"; this time a sensation *was* produced; and when Herby doled out the climax of his intelligence, — "his friend, Fred Wykham, whom he wrote about, you know; he 's waiting while I tell you," — the quiet party was broken up. Mrs. Oakfield told Herby to go and call him directly, and sank back on her seat on the sofa. It seemed like being brought nearer to her son than she had been for four long years. Margaret shared this feeling; and Rose and Mary, who scented a holiday from afar, were busily and *con amore* engaged in putting away the lesson-books.

Presently the noise of steps was heard in the hall, and Herby, throwing open the door, announced with more formality than was strictly necessary, — "Mr. Wykham!" and in walked Fred, limping a little (for he had not entirely recovered from the effects of his Mooltan wound), his handsome, good-humored countenance crossed by an unwonted shade of embarrassment; for these meetings with people whom you have heard much of, and who have heard much of you, yet who are, notwithstanding, perfect strangers, however pleasant in anticipation, however delightful when previous report has been confirmed by a few days' or even hours' intercourse, are, in their actual commencement, undoubtedly embarrassing.

Wykham was the first to recover himself; and his frank yet perfectly polite and respectful manner soon set all the party at their ease. He told them, in a whimsical way, of the trick he had played upon Herby; talked of his voyage, and different things; but neither side felt quite prepared yet to touch upon the subject which was uppermost in the thoughts of each.

"Have you been long in England, Mr. Wykham?" asked Margaret.

"Nearly seven weeks, I am ashamed to say."

"Why ashamed?"

"Because I promised your brother to present myself here as his ambassador, in six weeks, at least, from the day of my landing."

"We have no reason to quarrel with you, I am sure, but rather to be much obliged to you for being so punctual when you must have had a great deal to detain you at your own home. Were you ever at the lakes before you went to India?"

"No, never."

"Have you been in any mountain country?"

"None but the Himalayas."

Ah, I forgot; you will think nothing of our little mole-hills after those giants."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Oakfield; from what I have already seen, I assure you I give the preference to these lovely mole-hills of yours, very decidedly. Ned always told me — By the by, does it sound odd to you to hear a perfect stranger talking of your brother as Ned?"

"Rather, perhaps," said Mrs. Oakfield, smiling, "but very pleasant, certainly."

"Well, you know, I have been calling him nothing else for the last three years."

"Where did you last see him, Mr. Wykham?" asked Margaret.

"At Middleton's house. Did you ever hear of Mr. Middleton, by the by?"

"Of Ferozepore? O yes! — all the names of Edward's friends are household words with us"; then, recollecting that Wykham was one of those friends, she stopped rather abruptly, and blushed; Wykham understood, and was too polite to add to her embarrassment by a spooney compliment.

"Well, it was at Middleton's house, at Ferozepore, on the 15th of October, just as I got into my palki to start for Calcutta, the very day that Stanton — another friend of ours, Miss Oakfield — was married."

"And how was he looking?" was Mrs. Oakfield's natural and thoroughly maternal question.

"Why, pretty well; I cannot honestly give you as good an account as I should wish; but then he was depressed, I think, at losing Stanton, and, if I may say so, my unworthy self; but certainly very much better, indeed, than he had looked some months previously, before he went to Simla. But you must have heard from him long after I saw him last?"

"We got letters only yesterday," said Mrs. Oakfield, "dated the 20th of December; but he said nothing about his health; he never does."

"Where was he? at Lahore, I suppose? — how did he like his work?"

"At Lahore; and he seemed to be beginning to like his work a little better than he did at first; he says it is very hard."

"So it must be, I fancy; and he will find it harder in the hot weather."

"You are consoling," said Margaret, laughing.

"Ah! I forgot; I must not be a Job's comforter; but no wish to please can make cutcherry in the hot weather pleasant, I fancy."

"Cutcherry! — what 's that?"

"Has he not explained that word yet? — Cutcherry means properly — the court; or in plain words, the great, ugly white-washed room wherein he sits all day and does his work."

"And what is his work?" said Mrs. Oakfield; "can you try to give us some idea of it?"

"Why, I have not often been in a cutcherry, but I think I know its principal characteristics. At this moment I suppose — let me see, what time is it?"

"About one."

"Well, that, you know, is seven with him; ah! I don't suppose he is at work yet. This is quite a cool month, and the offices do not open, I believe, till ten or eleven, except in the hot weather, when they begin very early in the morning. But at about eleven o'clock to-day, just as it is beginning to get dark here, I suppose, if you could transport yourself to Lahore, you would see him occupying the only chair in a large, bare white room, the doors all thrown wide open, the whole space thronged with natives, standing, sitting, squatting, chattering. In the midst of all this hubbub, you would see poor Ned seated at a table covered with papers, written in strange characters; on the ground, by his side, a man jabbering Hindustanee, at about the same pace that a Frenchman talks. He is reading part of a case; either a petition, or an evidence, or an order connected with it; for the whole proceedings in all cases in those courts are committed to writing, and then read aloud to the magistrate."

"And," said Herby, "does Edward put people in prison, and so on?"

"Yes, I believe he has the power of imprisonment."

"But he is very young for that, is he not?" said Herbert, with a natural wonder, all his experience of magistrates being derived from the venerable gentlemen who assembled weekly at the court-house at Winchester.

"Well, I suppose he is; but you know men get to their work early in India."

"Were you a magistrate?" asked Herby.

"I! no; I never was anything except a lieutenant in my regiment; it is only lucky fellows, like your brother Ned,

who get appointments. Not that it was luck in his case; you heard of his saving the color at Chillianwalla?"

"Yes," said Herby; "but tell us all about it."

"Well, I was n't there myself, you know, any more than you were, but I 'll tell you what I heard of it as well as I can"; and he told the story with considerable animation, to Herbert's unutterable delight; who followed it up with innumerable questions about battles, sieges, marches, &c., &c.; all of which Wykham very good-humoredly answered; indeed, he was pleased and amused by the ardent temper and eager inquiries of the boy.

At last Mrs. Oakfield, who had been listening with an equal, but rather more shuddering interest, interposed, "You see how you must expect to be worried by us all, Mr. Wykham."

Of course Fred protested that nothing could be so delightful as such worrying.

"Well, but at any rate you must not be worried out of your dinner. Herby, show Mr. Wykham to his room, — the one next your own."

Wykham returned, having made himself presentable, and found them all present except Mrs. Oakfield. Meanwhile, Rose and Mary, who had been all the while prowling round the new-comer, taking observations, now made their advances more boldly, and at last came to close quarters; so that Mrs. Oakfield, on entering the room, found Rose thoroughly established on a flirtation footing.

Dinner was now announced; and after dinner they all went out for a walk round the lake. Of course the conversation turned, without ending, upon Edward; Wykham relating numberless little anecdotes that no one would ever mention in a letter, which seemed to give such reality to that distant, strange life; while he on his part had a thousand spots pointed out to him as associated with Edward; was

delighted and affected to find how his friend lived amongst his family; stored up a thousand particulars for that tremendous journal-letter which he despatched by the next Southampton mail, to reach poor Edward in the midst of his cutcherry toils, to drive him nearly mad with pain and pleasure.

By the end of that first day Fred Wykham was established with all, from Mrs. Oakfield to Mary, as a friend of the family; and even the old gardener, who was generally rather shy of new-comers, who had been a soldier himself in early days, and had contrived in the course of the day to get a talk with Wykham about Mooltan, expressed his opinion to Herby next day, that "the Captain from India was a fine young man."

When Wykham had been at Leatheburn about a week, the time came for Herbert to return to Winchester: he evinced a most unwonted reluctance to leave home, and spoke of the approaching half-year with impatience, almost with disgust. As the day approached, matters grew worse. On the very morning of his departure he had a long walk with his mother, who, after he was gone, seemed depressed and agitated in a degree greater than the mere usual separation would account for. Margaret saw that there was something the matter, and when he was gone, the following conversation took place between her and Mrs. Oakfield.

"You have seen, Margaret," said the latter, "how uneasy and restless poor Herby has been about returning to school this time?"

"Yes, I have, — and was surprised at it."

"I wish, Margaret, that Mr. Wykham had not come."

Margaret looked surprised; it was about the first time she had ever seemed to hear her mother make an inhospitable speech; and of Mr. Wykham too, who had told them all about Edward, and whom on that account, as well as his own, they were all disposed to like so much.

"At least," added Mrs. Oakfield, "I wish he had come a week later."

"What, so that Herby would have missed him?" said Margaret, still more surprised; "why, Herby, I thought, seemed so fond of him."

"Indeed he was, and I do not wonder at it; he is just the person to attract such a boy as Herby; and yet I wish it had been otherwise; for he has, most unconsciously, had a very disturbing, unsettling influence upon the dear boy. What do you think was the subject of our conversation this morning?"

Margaret had no idea.

"Fancy his wanting to go to India!"

Margaret understood it all, and almost wondered that she had not thought of it before. Why it was the old story: a young, handsome, dashing cavalry soldier, coming home with honor, and talking about battles and sieges, and so on, had of course made the young, high-spirited boy of sixteen mad to throw away his stupid books, and mount the red or blue jacket, and be off to do likewise. Margaret understood it all, and looked very grave.

"I could not refuse him if he set his heart upon it," his mother added; "and yet, Margaret, I think it would kill me."

"But, mother, we have no reason to think he will set his heart upon it; he has been excited by Mr. Wykham's conversation, and manner, and circumstances; it is a pity, certainly. I wish, as you say, that Mr. Wykham had waited a week longer, though it seems almost ungracious to say so, — does it not?"

"I am sure, Margaret, he need have no suspicion of not being welcome; the most welcome guest that has come into our house since your brother left it, — and that not only for Edward's sake; I admire his kind, gentle, soldier-like bear-

ing very greatly: he often reminds me of some I used to see in my youthful days, when soldiers and sailors were more plentiful than they are now-a-days, and more thought of; but that has all nothing to do with Herby, — God bless him."

"No; but, mother, I was going to say, that I do not really think there is much danger of his seriously setting his heart upon India. He would, when he began to think seriously of it, shrink from the idea of leaving home, as acutely as Edward did, and he would not have Edward's all-constraining motive to carry him through. He has just been excited, as I suppose boys of his age easily are, and now it is a very good thing that he is gone, darling fellow, and at Winchester he will soon forget Mr. Wykham and India, depend upon it: but still it is very unfortunate; how I wish Edward could speak to him!"

"He might write to him," said her mother.

"Not till the Winchester half was almost over, and the mischief perhaps done. No; I think the best plan would be to get Mr. Wykham to write to him."

It was agreed that this was the best plan. "After all," said Margaret, "I have no great dread of Herby's actually going to India. He would never make up his mind to leave this beloved lake."

They had reached, as she spoke, the foot of the lawn of velvet-like turf, which sloped down to the lake bank. A little stone pier ran out into the water; the old green and white family boat rocked gracefully at a short distance from the shore, chained to its brown, water-stained post; the air was mild and silky, as it is in a moist, mild February day; the lake looked gray and warm; the mountains seemed to share in the universal gentleness that pervaded all nature, as they lay in their soft outline, now crossed by fleecy clouds, now haunted by the play of the passing sun-gleam. The

sanguine spring flowers, the crocuses and snowdrops in the garden, were bursting into life, able and willing to forget that one gentle day does not make a spring, that March winds and frosts will too surely come to nip that precious life. In the background, the old house of rough country stone, overgrown with roses and other creepers. In its neutral color, its picturesque shape, its kindly hospitable comfort — in rare harmony with the beauty that enshrined it — nestled under the woody crags of Leatheburn Fells, as though it were itself a true part and parcel of the friendly hills. Well might Margaret think that Herbert would be unwilling to leave such a home.

All that day Margaret was puzzling herself as to how she should introduce the subject with Wykham, when the latter unconsciously helped her, by saying, —

"Your brother did not seem at all to like going back to school this morning, Miss Oakfield, which is not to be wondered at. What a fine young fellow he is! — very like Ned; only I should say more fiery."

"He is not generally so reluctant to go back to Winchester," said Margaret, making a side-movement towards the point; "I hope you appreciate the compliment which he paid you by his unusual indisposition to leave home."

Wykham laughed incredulously.

"Poor Herby! I don't feel guilty of having much to do with his distress, I must say."

"You had really, though," said Margaret, gravely.

Wykham looked puzzled, and thought Margaret seemed a great deal more serious than there was any occasion for.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I am avenging poor Herby for the trick you played him," said Margaret, laughing; "you do look so delightfully puzzled, Mr. Wykham: what will you say then, when I tell you that you have sent poor Herby away in distress, and made mamma very unhappy and uneasy about him?"

"I should say," replied Wykham, in his turn becoming grave, "that I had most unconsciously done a mischief which it would be quite impossible for me to laugh at." He did not mean this for a rebuke; but Margaret felt it as such, and colored as she said, —

"You are right, Mr. Wykham; this is not so fair a joke as you made upon dear Herby. No; the matter is simply this; you *have* perplexed us all a little, though, as you say, most unconsciously and most innocently. The fact is, Herby told mamma, before he went away this morning, that he wanted to go to India."

Wykham's surprise overpowered his good manners, and evaporated into a long semi-whistle.

"And although," added Margaret, "mamma does not think that he will really settle down into a serious purpose about it, yet she fears (and I think she is right) its unsettling him just now, and giving him a distaste for his Winchester work."

"I see, — I see; it was that Mooltan business, I suppose, did the mischief; what a griff I was to go bragging about my campaigns, as if any good could possibly come of it!"

Margaret could not bear to see anybody suffering unjustly, even by his own reproaches.

"I am sure, Mr. Wykham, you have no cause to reproach yourself for your kindness to Herby."

Wykham felt more pleased than he had perhaps any business to be at such a simple remark: he tried, as is the treacherous manner of men, to elicit a repetition of the consolation by a reiteration of what had drawn it forth, but was disappointed: Margaret was silent, and he soon grew tired of abusing himself uncontradicted.

"What is to be done?" he continued; "I would n't for any consideration be the guilty cause of any man's going to that wretched country; I wish Herby was lying as I was

this time last year, in all the agonies of a painful wound, in a state of helpless incapacity, while my regiment was in the field, and overwhelmed by perpetual dust-storms!"

"Herby is very much obliged to you, I am sure," said Margaret, laughing, "but we mean to ask you to apply a less severe remedy."

"How?—what?" exclaimed Wykham; "of course I shall only be too glad to do anything."

"We thought, that is mamma and I, that you would perhaps write him a letter" (Wykham looked all abroad): "just to tell him that Indian life was not altogether made up of glorious battles and sieges."

"I see, I see," cried Wykham, "give him a hair of the dog that bit him; I and India dividing the character of dog between us; depend upon it, Miss Oakfield, I will write him a letter by to-day's post."

"You cannot," interrupted Margaret, laughing at his energy, "unfortunately it went out three hours ago."

"Well, well, to-morrow; and if there is virtue in words, he shall, after reading it, hate India with as profound a hatred and abhorrence as I do, though that is a bold word."

"Poor Herby! he will be puzzled by your 'Look on this picture and on this'; your glorious siege of Mooltan, and your threatened letter. However, Mr. Wykham, if you will try to drive this Indian scheme out of his head, I believe you will be doing him, and all of us too, a very great service."

Wykham was prompt to redeem his promise; he wrote that night a letter to Herby, certainly not holding out any very inviting picture of Indian life; told him that battles and sieges were all very well, but were dearly earned by long years of uncomfortable inactivity; told him that of every hundred who went every year to India in haste, ninety-nine repented at leisure; quoted his own experience; how he had gone to

India principally to get rid of his school work, and how he had ever since wished himself back again; told him how his own brother hated India, and concluded with a glowing eulogy of home life in general, and such a home life as Leatheburn in particular.

It was all to no purpose; and if Mrs. Oakfield and Margaret had had more experience, they never would have expected much from such a plan. When a fire is lighted in a boy's fancy, no amount of preaching or practical experience will put it out. It is either to be met by counter irritation, that is, kindling another flame in another and counteracting direction, to do which requires great art and patient kindness, or be suffered to burn itself out. Herby wrote back just such an answer as a boy of sixteen, with head well up, making a push at his first hobby, was likely to write. There was an importance in having a scheme for his whole life to discuss, in tossing carelessly off such words as India, ten years' service, furlough, the army, active service, &c., &c., which flattered his dignity. He wrote very good-humoredly, with a comical air of boyish experience, said he was very much obliged to Wykham for his letter, but that he felt an active life would be more suited to him than a studious one (ah! how many boys have, ere now, used that phrase, and will use it again as a respectable way of saying they prefer being idle, and wearing a red coat, and becoming spurious men all at once, to going on steadily at their present work and *earning* genuine manhood by steadily serving out the period of boyhood; boys are sometimes too much encouraged in the use of this language, which is seldom better than cant); said politely enough that Wykham's own honorable experience contradicted the evidence of his letter, and wound up with that *argumentum ad hominem*, so thoroughly characteristic of boy logic, closely associated as it is with all the *tu-quoque* region of dialectics, — that if Wykham disliked

India so very much, why was he himself intending to return to it at the expiration of his furlough? In fact, it was quite clear that Herby was precisely as obstinate as people with hobby-horses usually are; and the unfortunate results soon appeared in the unfavorable reports, which now, for the first time, began to be received from the Winchester authorities, of his idleness and indisposition to submit to ordinary school discipline.

This made Mrs. Oakfield very uneasy, and poor Wykham was really quite distressed at the mischief he had occasioned. He talked the matter over and over again with Margaret, but he could hit upon no remedy. It is not quite certain that Wykham expected much to result from these conferences, but he liked the intimate footing and feeling of confidence which they seemed to imply. At last, one evening about three weeks after Herbert's departure, Wykham said suddenly, as they sat at dinner (there had been received in the course of the day one of the unsatisfactory school reports alluded to above), "I shall be obliged to wish you good by to-morrow, Mrs. Oakfield."

Mrs. Oakfield and Margaret both started. There was nothing strange in the announcement; he had been staying for four weeks, and that is a very fair duration for any visit, but still it startled them. They had never supposed that he was to be a permanent inmate of Leatheburn, and yet they had not thought of his going. His intimacy with Edward, and his sympathy with them about Herby, had made him appear more in the light of a member of the family than an ordinary guest. Everybody urged him to stay; Rose and Mary not the least; Mrs. Oakfield was equally sincere, though less vehement in her assurances: "I had no idea you were going so soon, Mr. Wykham; we have no right to complain; it has been very good of you to give us so much of your time just after your arrival in England;

but I trust you will recollect your promise to Rose and Mary, and give us the pleasure of another visit before long."

Wykham began with an animated and sincere declaration, that, so far from there having been any self-denying virtue in the case, he had never been so happy in his life, when, thinking perhaps that he was speaking with rather excessive vehemence, he stopped abruptly and awkwardly, and said, "I really intended to ask you to let me return almost immediately to complete my visit, which, though it has been already so long, I should be sorry to think of as over; in short, it is some business which calls me away, and if you will allow me, I shall be back here in a fortnight." Hereupon, Rose and Mary roared as heartily for joy as they had done, but a short time before, for grief. There could be little doubt as to the sincerity of their welcome; nor, indeed, of the more quiet, but equally genuine assurance, which he received from Mrs. Oakfield, that they would all be glad to see him back again. "You will find a friend of ours here," she added, "upon your return."

Wykham looked at Margaret with the suspicious quickness of one already interested in knowing who were the friends of the house. "Oh!" he said, "indeed."

"A Mrs. Vernon," she continued, "whose name you may possibly have heard, as you seem to have heard everything about us from Edward."

"Vernon, Vernon, — yes, I must have heard the name. O yes! was n't it the poor young fellow who died at Hajeepoor when Ned was there?"

"The same; and it is his mother and two sisters whom I am expecting next week. You are going to London, I suppose?"

"Yes, to London, perhaps further."

"It seems a pity to go so far for so short a time. Your business could not be transacted by letter, could it?"

"No, Mrs. Oakfield, indeed it could not; I have tried that once."

The speech and the laugh were rather a mystery to them, but they did not feel at liberty to ask more questions.

The next day (it was early in March) Wykham took his departure by the mail; as he entered the intricate wooded path by which Herby had conducted him on his first arrival, but which was now familiar to him, and looked across the bay at that peaceful, happy house, he again wondered how Edward Oakfield could ever have left it, and this thought seemed somehow to suggest the purpose of his journey, for he turned and walked on a few steps; then stopped, turned and looked again at the house; looked so long and earnestly that his reverie was only disturbed by the sound of the guard's horn, at which signal he started, sighed, turned round once more, and ran off as fast as he could to the little inn, where the mail had just pulled up, and where his luggage in a wheelbarrow had already arrived.

From all which stoppings and turnings, and lookings and sighings, the reader may conjecture, if he pleases, without fear of contradiction, that Wykham was in love.

CHAPTER XX.

"Then in that time and place I spoke to her,
Requiring, — though I knew it was mine own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear, —
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved :
And in that time and place she answered me,
And in the compass of three little words
More musical than ever came in one,
The silver fragments of a broken voice
Made me most happy, lisping, 'I am thine.'"

TENNYSON.

WYKHAM travelled all night, and reached London in the morning. After a bath and hasty ante-breakfast (which is called in India "a little breakfast") at the Euston Hotel, he proceeded to the private residence of a man of law in Montague Place, who recognized, but seemed surprised at seeing, him. "I thought, Mr. Wykham, you said you would not return from the North till the middle of April."

"Why, yes, I did say so, Wilson, but here I am, you see; I am going to leave town again this evening, and wanted just to have a talk with you about these affairs," taking some notes out of his pocket as he spoke.

"There is not much to talk about; Lady Prescot's will is proved; there never was any difficulty about it; and your first quarterly instalment of £1,000 per annum, funded property, has been drawn by me, and lies to your credit at Drummond's."

"That 's all right," said Wykham; "well, what I wanted to ask you was to send to Radley's, the East Indian agents, you know."

"I know, I know."

"And to tell them to draw my pay quarterly at the India House, and pay it into Drummond's."

"Certainly; but you don't mean to say you came up all the way from Westmoreland or Cumberland to tell me what might have been put into half a page of note-paper?"

"No, not exactly; I had other business; don't look frightened, Wilson; nothing in the £. *s. d.* line; but besides, I have really business to do here also, for if this legacy is all right, I must make arrangements for retiring from the service."

"You don't mean to do that?"

"Not mean it! — don't I? Why on earth should I go back to that purgatory if I can live here? Why, it would be an insult to my good aunt's memory."

"At any rate," said the prudent attorney, "there 's no hurry: you have three years' furlough, have n't you?"

"Yes; that is, I should have to leave England in about two years and a half."

"Well, then, there is no good in retiring till that period is expired. You may just as well draw your pay during that time as not."

"No," said Wykham, "I won't do poor John Company any more; if I don't mean to do any more work for him, I won't draw his pay either. However, it will take some time, I fancy; I wish, by the by, you would see about my blood money."

"Your what?" said the man of peace with a slight shudder.

"O," said Wykham, laughing, "merely the compensation money for my wound. There is such a delay about these

things, that I could not get it before I left India, though I had, and have still, my medical papers. I don't see why I should let John off that. My valuable blood is worth paying for."

"You had better do that through Radley, they understand those things best. I will speak to them. But take my advice and think better about retiring. Depend upon it, £1,000 a year is not so much as you think."

"It will do," said Wykham, laughing.

"Well, but then your profession; it is a great thing for a young man to have a profession."

"My dear Wilson, you waste your eloquence; nothing on earth would induce me to return to India."

"Ah," said the other, dryly, "I see."

"See what?"

"Oh! why I see that young men do not fly out at India all of a sudden, and go down and bury themselves in a Northern wilderness for months together without meaning something by it."

"I tell you," replied Wykham, "I always flew out at India, as you call it, from the day I landed there; and as to what you irreverently call a wilderness, I went down to that lovely country, which even you, if you could see it, would admire with all the fervency that parchment and process may have left in you, to visit, according to promise, the family of one of my friends in India."

"Yes, yes, of course; your friend had sisters, too, I presume. Ah, well; never mind: come and have some breakfast."

They walked into a room, the snug and even refined air of which bore witness that parchment and process had done less to ossify Mr. Wilson than Wykham had chosen to suppose. There were some good prints on the walls, and a large collection of books on the shelves, amongst which

Wykham observed a considerable sprinkling of the poets, contained mainly in those large single volumes which have of late years been such a blessing to the poor reading community, who cannot afford comfortable many-tomed editions. Neither the furniture of the room nor the plentiful and appetizing array of the breakfast-table corresponded with Wykham's crude, rough notions of the crabbed discomfort of a bachelor attorney. Mr. Wilson had been for many years solicitor to one Lady Prescot, and had for a yet longer period enjoyed a lucrative and honorable practice in his profession. Lady Prescot was Wykham's aunt; she had sold a large West India property, left to her as a young widow, by her husband, at a time when such property was salable; and had invested the proceeds in securities nearer home, and, as it turned out, more profitable. She had never married again, though of course it was rumored, and was indeed likely enough, that she had refused innumerable offers; but had sunk into a queer, eccentric, solitary way of living, which grew upon her till she liked to be as much unmolested as possible by all except her lady companion. She remained on good terms with Wykham's father, and had largely assisted him in his son's outfit, when Fred went to India, and at different times, though always in a strange, roundabout way of her own. She approved very greatly of his going out; said it was very well that the boy should learn to do something for himself, and see the world; and the very day Fred was shipped, she, without saying anything to anybody, made her will, leaving him half her property, that is to say, £1,000 a year, and the other half to her companion. Neither Fred nor his parents had the slightest suspicion of the existence of any such arrangement till the day of her death, which occurred suddenly, just after Fred's return on furlough. She lived to hear of this event, and said something to the effect that she was "glad the boy was come back to

comfort his parents, who were good folk who had never disturbed her, and had provided for their own children without seeming to depend on others; and that he must not go back again to the Indies." The next thing the Wykhams heard of her was that she was dead, and Fred her joint heir.

Fred had borne his change of circumstances with more philosophy than might have been expected from him: his first impulse was to laugh, and say it was very odd; he then laughed more heartily, as (with more trouble than the joke was worth) he turned a large map of India, which adorned the room, with its face to the wall, in token of his renouncing all connection with that part of the globe; and lastly, sent for a cab and drove down to Gray's Inn, to ascertain from Mr. Wilson, the executor of the will, and an old friend of his father's, — a friend, too, of his own boyish days, — how matters really stood. Mr. Wilson received him with kindness and congratulations; told him that his money was in the 3½ per cents; talked a good deal of probates, administrations, and so on; and finally engaged that all should be concluded and settled, he, Mr. Wilson, being constituted agent, attorney, factotum, and what not, within the space of six weeks. Wykham was quite satisfied: he knew he was in good hands, but still he left the lawyer's chambers with a different feeling from that with which he had entered them. He did not feel quite so confident of being really a moneyed man. He had left England a mere boy, and had never been troubled in India with any other money transactions than drawing his monthly pay. The consequence was, that he knew a good deal more about cavalry movements than probates, and all lawyer terms and dealings seemed to him to invest things with a halo, not only of distance, but uncertainty. He therefore asked his father to say nothing to anybody about the change in his fortunes, which the old man, though he laughed at the reasons assigned for making

the request, readily agreed to; and himself set off for Leatheburn, where he observed the same silence, first, from a religious belief that it was quite a chance whether or not the lawyers allowed him to have his money, and afterwards, when he heard that it was all arranged, because he saw no good in talking about it: he was the last man in the world to boast, or indeed to feel proud, of being rich. This will explain the footing on which Wykham found himself in the breakfast-room, with Mr. Wilson, in Montague Place. The latter tried once or twice to get at "the business" which had brought him up to town, but Fred only laughed, and declared that it was "a merely private personal matter," which it was quite clear he did not intend to say anything more about. He went after breakfast to Radley's reading-rooms, looked over the Indian papers, felt with wonder how long he had been mixed up with that strange, distant land, from which he now seemed separated for ever. The thought was impressive, but did not cost him much pain. Having studied the *Delhi Gazette* and *Lahore Chronicle* to his satisfaction, he went back to his hotel, had luncheon, and then drove down to the Southwestern Station, and booked his place, for the reader will have perhaps guessed his destination before this, — Winchester.

The fact was, that Wykham was quite determined to do all he could to allay the excitement which he found he had raised in Herby's mind; and having, as he told Mrs. Oakfield, "failed signally in correspondence," was now about to try the effect of a personal interview. He had concealed his intention, wishing not to raise hopes that would very probably be disappointed; he knew, also, that Mrs. Oakfield would have felt bound to protest against his making so long a journey for such a purpose, and thought it as well to avoid the friendly conflict. He reached Winchester at six in the evening; it was almost dark, so he took up his quar-

ters for the night at the George; and about twelve the next morning walked up to St. Mary's. He asked the first boy he met wandering about in the college precincts, where Herbert Oakfield could be found.

"Oakfield!" said the youngster, dropping the Christian name with great contempt, "O, I know; you must go over to Commoners."

"O yes!" said Wykham, unwilling to acknowledge his ignorance, for that boy evidently felt his superiority; "thank you; and where does Commoners live?"

This was almost too much for the boy, but he was polite, as public school boys generally are; so, swallowing down his intense enjoyment of the stranger's tremendous ignorance, he said, civilly,—

"If you will come with me, I will find him out for you."

Wykham gladly assented, thinking himself only too lucky to get a guide in this *terra incognita;* he clung to him as his guardian angel, as they walked on amongst the wondering faces: a man never feels so *shy* as he does amongst boys.

"Here 's Oakfield!" exclaimed the guide, suddenly. "Here, Oakfield!" he shouted.

Herby turned round, and, directly he saw Wykham, came running up.

"Halloa!" he exclaimed, "how do you do? how very glad I am to see you! when did you leave Leatheburn? where are you staying? when do you go? By Jove, how very glad I am to see you!"

Wykham shook hands with a warmth corresponding to such a greeting; it was as real a pleasure to him to see Herby, as to Herby to see him; not only because he liked the boy himself so much, but also because his face, amongst those strange groups, looking so friendly, so homelike, reminded him of Leatheburn and Margaret.

"I 'll answer all your questions presently," he said, laughing; "there were about half-a-dozen, I think, in one sentence; but first you must go and get leave to come and spend the day with me; and also have the goodness to introduce me to my guide, without whom I don't think I should ever have found you."

"Ruskin, senior," said Herby, "Mr. Wykham, — Mr. Wykham, Mr. Ruskin."

Ruskin was a good-looking young fellow, in Middle Part, some two years junior to Herby.

"Will you give me the pleasure of your company at dinner, at six o'clock to-night, at the George, together with Oakfield?"

Of course Ruskin would be too happy; would go home and get leave. So the two went off, and obtained the required permission.

"Well, then," said Wykham, "I 'll just take an hour or so of your lions first, and then we'll go up to the George to luncheon."

So they all three went over the schools, the chapel, and cathedral, together. Herby's enjoyment of Wykham's mistake about Commoners was as intense as Ruskin could have wished. But they had plenty more of such mistakes to laugh at. Two Winchester fellows talking to a stranger in their own dialect are sure to have sufficient occasion to admire his utter discomfiture. Every minute Wykham had to stop and request to know the English of some such words as "Remedy," "Tugs," "Semper Socius," "Hills," &c., &c.

"Well," he said at last, in despair, "Hindustanee is bad enough, but I 'll be shot if Winchester does n't beat it; come along, Herby, let 's go to luncheon, and for Heaven's sake talk English. Good morning," he added, bowing to Ruskin, "we shall see you at six o'clock."

As they walked arm in arm up the street towards the inn,

they talked of Leatheburn. Wykham gave a minute account of the morning of his departure, of his stay there since Herbert left, of the walks, and of the flourishing condition of each individual member of the family when he had last seen them.

"I am going down there again very soon," Wykham said.

"Are you?" said poor Herby, mournfully; "I wish I was."

It would have been hard to say which of the two most enjoyed talking on this subject.

"Well now, Herby," Wykham began, as they sat opposite each other at the well-spread table in the coffee-room of the George, "(you must n't mind my calling you by your Christian name, it comes most natural; you know I 'm used to do it with your brother: you may call me Fred, if you like.) I 'll tell you candidly what I came down to Winchester for. In the first place it was to see you."

"I 'm sure I am very much obliged to you."

"No, I don't know that you will be, when I tell you why I particularly wanted to see you, though I dare say you more than half guess. You remember what I wrote to you about?"

Herby nodded.

"Well, I can't bear to think that my having made a fool of myself should lead you to do the same. I beg your pardon, Herby, but, upon my honor, I could n't call a fellow anything else who in your position was to go to India."

"It would n't follow that he should be one though," rejoined Herby, rather dryly.

"Well, that 's true too, and yet, my good fellow, what is there to tempt you? I talked like an ass about Mooltan, and no good came of it, as no good, I believe, ever does come of bragging. I don't wonder at a fellow of your age

getting excited at hearing of campaigns and so on; they do excite all of us; but remember it is not certain that you see service because you go to India. Pass me the beer, Herby. Lots of men," he resumed, after an interview with the tankard, "have been thirty years in India, and never seen a shot fired; and now the knowing ones say there is to be no more fighting for I don't know how many years. Besides, if you do get one campaign in your first ten years' service, and are not knocked over, still there are nine dreary years of cantonment, dull, hot, uncomfortable vegetation. I dare say you would like the fighting part of the business well enough, but I am perfectly certain you would hate all the rest. I think I see you on a hot, dusty day, after having been four or five years in the country, confined to the house, too sick to read, thinking of home, and wondering what on earth induced you to leave it."

"People leave home every day," urged Herby, rather staggered.

"They do; and how much they like it! You see, a man ten thousand miles off can't come back the first fine morning he wants to; he very soon finds he has got a bad bargain, but also one which he must stick to; and so, because he stays where he is, and is too much of a man to howl and complain, ashamed too to seem to regret his own act, people think, or pretend to think, that he is very happy, and so on. I tell you, Herby, you would hate India; everybody does. The best men, such as your own brother, who work hard, and, as it is said, *get on*, hate it; idle, good-for-nothing dogs, like myself, hate it. Perhaps the worst like it best; they can get drunk there, and that is about all they want: but even they hate a country where beer and wine are expensive."

"But," said Herby, changing his ground, "what am I to do in England?"

"Why, Herby, the first answer to that, I should think, is, that you should do well at Winchester and the University."

"Ugh!" said Herby, with a look of great disgust. This was, of all others, the very most unpalatable proposition to him.

Wykham was puzzled; he had not been used to this style of argument; he did the wisest thing he could under the circumstances, followed his own instinct, guided by a sincere desire to say the right thing: he knew it was no good to assure a person that he did like that which he himself said he did not.

"Well, old fellow, I have no doubt your work is irksome to you, and the prospect of it still more so; and I believe I ought to sympathize with you as much as anybody, for I remember how I hated that Latin and Greek work myself; only, Herby, I never got so far as you have, so that it was less interesting to me than it must be to you. However, observe what was the consequence in my case. I threw it all up, and went to India, thinking I should have nothing to do; that lies at the bottom of all our fine talk about change of duties, active employment, and so on: eh, Herby?"

Herby blushed, but said nothing.

"Well, I went to India, and, before a year was out, I would have been glad to be at Homer and Virgil again for twelve hours out of the twenty-four, if only I could have got back. O Herby, what a fool I did think myself! A whole school day here may be a nuisance, but depend upon it, my boy, it is a very seventh heaven of enjoyment compared to a long succession of whole days of hot, vacant idleness in India."

The boy looked unpersuaded still; he had not much to say; he felt the cogent force of Wykham's candor, but the hope of relief from the tedium of work by a revolution of scene and occupation, had taken too strong a hold upon him to be relinquished without a struggle.

"You would advise me, then," he said, "to make up my mind to go plodding on for some six or seven more dreary, dreary years, at work which I detest?"

His face looked the very picture of dismay as he said this, in a most dismal tone: but Wykham was glad to find that he thus tacitly consented to the matter being put on its real merits.

"Well, Herby, it *is* very horrid; and, as I said, I have no right to preach. But really you will find something horrid in your work everywhere. That is what Ned would tell you. He has found his duty harder in India than he did at Oxford; and then remember that he went through his Winchester and Oxford work first. That is the great point. If you really feel that an active life (if you *will* continue so to call one of the most inactive careers which a young man can possibly enter upon) is best suited for you, then you know best, and have a right to act for yourself just as much as anybody else: but what are you to do for the next four years? Edward was twenty-one, you know, when he went out."

"I need not go out as old as that."

"Heaven forbid, my dear fellow, you should go much earlier. Come, Herby, make a compromise; make up your mind to go through your school and university career first, on the understanding that you reserve a perfect right to do all you can, and that your friends shall help you, after that. I will undertake that my father shall get you an appointment after you have taken your degree: though I tell you candidly I am perfectly certain that *then* you will not care much to make me keep my promise."

"Six years' drudgery!" said Herby, shaking his head slowly.

"No, not six years; depend upon it, that before a year is over this fit will pass. The great difficulty is to believe

that. I hate talking like this, Herby," he said, getting up; "it is so easy to talk, and I know well enough so confoundedly hard to act. I feel for you, my dear boy; I do, upon my word. I know that when one has taken it into one's head to come to a halt and rest, it is awful pain to make the effort, and resolve to pass by the tempting place and go on. But I do believe, indeed, that your life's happiness depends upon it. I declare it makes me wretched to think of your going out to India and hating me all your life, as you must and would, as having been the first person who put it into your head. Just think of your home, Herby," continued Wykham, with an unconscious skill, opening his heaviest battery last. "Wait six years; not dreary ones, believe me; once make the effort, horrid I know, but make it, and the dreariness will all be over, and your mother would no more oppose you, or rather no more try to dissuade you (you know as well as I do that she would never think of *opposing* you *now*) than she did Ned. You owe her a good deal, my boy; you do really; you would hate yourself were you to break up and throw unhappiness into that home of yours; the best and the happiest, and by Heaven the most beautiful, that I ever saw, or heard, or dreamt of. Ah!" he added, moderating the tone of extraordinary energy into which he had warmed, "I see you give in! come to terms, old fellow, eh? Treaty agreed to, signed and sealed at this blessed George Inn, 10th of March, 1850: hurrah!" And Wykham sank back into his chair, that moustached dragoon as pleased as a child, and very nearly doing what his companion was doing, for it was the twinkle in Herby's eye that had made him claim the victory. The boy walked to the other end of the room, busying himself with the pretence of looking out for pen, ink, and paper, at the writing-table. Wykham took the hint.

"What," he said, "you mean to put the treaty on paper,

ch? write a letter to Leatheburn, — is that it? A very good idea too, Herby; I only wish I might be there to see them get the letter."

Herby had not had any such thought or intention; but he would not say so, and sat down to write.

"George Inn, Winchester.

"My dearest Mother: —

"I am spending the day at the Inn here, with Mr. Wykham, who came this morning. He has been advising me very strongly to give up the idea of India, at all events for the present; so I will say no more about it till I leave Winchester, at any rate, and that will be two years; though I do not at all think that he is right in saying that by that time I shall have got reconciled to this abominable, stupid, useless Latin and Greek; to which, however, I shall now go back as before, and work as well as I can. I postpone the Indian plan, but I tell you candidly, that you will find me less fickle about it than you may expect. However, I will say nothing about that, and for two years, at any rate, will victimize myself.

"I am, &c."

He went and showed this to Wykham, who was delighted. He knew that Herbert would keep his word, and the assurances of an unchangeable purpose he inwardly estimated at no more than they were worth.

"And now, Herby," he said, "tell me one thing more: you are not offended with me? you don't think I have been meddling with what is no business of mine?"

Herby smiled, shook his own head and his friend's hand, by way of answer.

"But," he asked, "I want also to know one thing; if you hate India so much, how do you like the thought of going back yourself?"

How glad Wykham was to have the wherewithal to

allay the not unnatural suspicion implied in this question!

"Going back? I 'm never going back, my dear fellow."

"What, never?"

"Never no more; I 'm a gentleman at large, Herby, and mean to live at home at ease; and so you see, I, an idle dog, with nothing to do, am preaching work and duty and I don't know what all to you. Cool, is n't it? But I want you to grant me one favor, Herby, and that is not to post that letter of yours."

"What, not send the treaty?"

"No, no, I did n't say that; — send it? I should think so; but do let me have the very great pleasure of being the bearer of it."

"Why, are you going back again?"

"I hope to start to-morrow, and if I am the bearer of an express, shall, of course, travel day and night in the correct express style."

"But did you come all the way from Leatheburn to see me about this?" asked Herby, in a tone of surprise, as the truth dawned upon him.

"Of course I did; why not? I like knocking about; that is in England, not in India, Herby."

Herbert felt touched, and perhaps flattered, at the thought of Wykham's having made such an exertion on his account. It gave, too, a dignity to his scheme, an enhancement to the value of his present sacrifice, which pleased him.

"Of course," he said, "I shall be very glad if you will take the letter; I only wish I could come myself."

"I wish you could, too: well, what o'clock is it? Four; — how we have been talking!"

Herby went off to dress for dinner, promising to return

with Ruskin at six. Wykham went to stroll by the banks of the Itchen, and feast upon the thoughts of the pleasure he should convey to the party at Leatheburn.

"He is a fine fellow," he thought to himself; "I wish I could resign my fancies to my duty as bravely as he does. How pleased Ned will be when he hears it all! I have taken a leaf out of his sermon book, I think; I had no idea I could preach so; after all, the man who said he did n't know whether he could play the fiddle or not because he had never tried, was right: we do not know what we can do till we try, I declare."

The next day Wykham left Winchester, travelled all night from London, and reached Leatheburn soon after the dawn of a chill Sunday morning, the fifth day after he had quitted it. His history was soon told, and afforded all the pleasure he could have expected, earned for him more gratitude than he thought he deserved.

A letter was received from Herby himself the next morning, in which he confirmed all that Wykham had said, but solaced himself by clinging to the prospect of reviving the scheme, which he now consented to lay aside, in two years' time.

"But that 's all humbug, you know," Wykham said, "by the time two years, or two months, are gone, he 'll think no more of India than he did six months ago."

And so it proved. It cost the poor boy a hard struggle to wrench himself back to his work, but having done so forcibly in spite of his inclination, his inclination gave in and meekly followed his will; he had arrived at that period when a classical education assumes a different aspect; when drudgery gives place to science; the painful acquiring of the rudiments of a dead language, to the animated study of an immortal literature. No more complaints were made of idleness; and with this the restless distaste for discipline

disappeared also; so that by the end of the half-year, the second master even ventured to hint at, as already looming in the distance, that most perfect consummation of a tutor's hope, a first class at Oxford.

"All very well," muttered Fred, when he heard this, — "a capital thing, I've no doubt; but I've a notion that Herby did something harder than a first class that afternoon when he came to the George."

But we are anticipating; this was not till July; and how came Wykham to be at Leatheburn again then? It may serve to explain this, if we go back to the end of March, and follow the course of one of the customary afternoon walks. The party, consisting originally of Mrs. Vernon and her two daughters, Wykham, Margaret, Rose, and Mary, went skirting the hill above the house for two or three miles, till they emerged near the top of that Dunmail Raise which has been so often alluded to. But here a misfortune befell poor little Edith Vernon, productive of more important consequences than often follow upon a child's becoming lame from walking with a stone in her shoe; the stone was taken out, but the tramping along the hard highway was too much for Edith, who had thought nothing of the pain so long as she could run about in the woods with Rose and Mary and her sister; she sat down and begged piteously to be taken home. Margaret was for returning at once, but Mrs. Vernon declared it would be a great pity to lose so beautiful an afternoon (there was the first light flush of pale green visible everywhere in the larch wood), that she would take Edith home while the others continued their walk; this suggestion was clamorously supported by the other children; and the scamp, Fred, said, with a compassionate gravity, that it would be hard upon the poor little girls to lose their walk, and so Mrs. Vernon and Edith went one way, and the rest of the party another. Thus Wykham and Margaret

were left, as it were, alone; and their situation had something of embarrassment in it, partly from its novelty, partly from the fact that the feelings of both with regard to each other had, during the last few weeks, undergone a change unperceived in its process, only perceived now in its maturity; like the growth of a child, or the coming out of the stars; that stealthy development so beautifully described by Keble: —

> "Who ever saw the earliest rose
> First open her sweet breast?
> Or when the summer sun goes down,
> The first soft star in evening's crown,
> Light up her gleaming crest?
>
> "Fondly we seek the dawning bloom
> On features wan and fair, —
> The gazing eye no change can trace;
> But look away a little space, —
> Then turn, and lo! 't is there." *

Under such circumstances it is a convenience to have a subject of conversation ready made, that shall turn up as naturally as the weather, and yet be more interesting. Edward was this convenient subject, and was certainly used most unsparingly, being lugged in unceremoniously at all times and in all seasons, yet with an ever fresh interest.

"I wonder what your brother is doing just now, Miss Oakfield; perhaps just going to his work, at Lahore, poor fellow!"

"Poor fellow, indeed," said Margaret; "I do dread the next hot season for him: has the very hot weather commenced yet?"

"Why, let me see: the 30th of March; no, not in the Punjab; it is bearable still, but will continue to get worse till about the 1st of May, when, if it was to get hotter still, the universe must crack bodily."

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* Christian Year, Fourth Sunday in Lent.

"There is no place in the world," said Margaret, looking round, "which I associate with Edward as much as this."

They had reached the top of the hill, and were come to the short stretch of level ground that connects the two sides of the pass: they sat down among the rocks to look down upon the valley below. The children soon left them to play in the stream, and so Wykham and Margaret were left alone.

"Indeed," said Wykham; "may I ask why?"

"These stones," she answered, smiling, "were fateful to him."

"How so?"

"It was here, Mr. Wykham, just where we are now sitting, that he determined to go to India."

"Indeed," said Wykham, with marked attention, as though wishing to hear more; "and were you with him?"

"O no! he told me of it afterwards (on this same road, though), but on this occasion he was alone. It was nearly six years ago, on the 25th of September, that he was sitting here alone for nearly two hours, revolving his destiny, as he said. He told me quite casually, but it struck me greatly at the time, and I have often and often thought of it since."

"I do not wonder," rejoined Wykham; "it is so seldom that a man can trace any important change in his life to one particular act of deliberate reflection; and when he can, it is indeed very striking; it has the same sort of interest, and in a far higher degree, as watching the source of a large river. Well," he added, looking round him, "he had a glorious temple wherein to think; a resolution made among these hills and rocks, and by that pure stream, ought to have been noble and pure and lofty."

"So I often think," said Margaret, "and so I am sure it was. I believe I half tried to dissuade him at the time, but I have been glad since that he did not listen to me; poor, dear Edward!"

"You think, then, that his going to India was no mistake; that he has been successful there?"

"You ought to answer that question, Mr. Wykham, instead of asking it."

"Well, I was thinking what he would say himself. It is difficult to tell, now that he has entered upon so different a course of life out there, but formerly I doubt whether he did not often wish himself back again. I used often to think, Miss Oakfield, and that before I was much in the habit of thinking about anything, that your brother had to contend against a continual sense of disappointment: I do not mean that he did not like the country; he used to own that, as a thing to be laughed at, and of no great consequence; but I had always a vague notion that he had a much deeper sorrow than this."

Margaret had been listening with eagerness; seeing that she made no answer, Wykham continued, —

"I don't mean that there was any morbid melancholy about him: a tendency this way he had, I know; he has told me so himself more lately; but one which he always resisted, and has, I think, completely overcome: it seems more as though he were oppressed by the seriousness of life, and harassed by an anxious desire to do right, which leaves its mark upon his countenance when he does not know it."

"Yes, yes, I can conceive all you say, very well; pray go on."

"Well, I remember this impressed me when I first knew him; I met him at Meerut, four years ago, dining with Stanton, a mutual and very dear friend of ours."

"I know."

"Well, I knew he was a griff (you know what that is, fresh in the country), and was prepared to look down upon him accordingly, — though he was very nearly my own age, — by virtue of my six years' seniority in the service; but I

found out, before dinner was over, that the looking down must be the other way, if at all. I did not see much of him then, but I liked him, and I think he liked me; in fact, I know he did, for we corresponded, from the very beginning, like old friends. I was a good deal more light-headed then than I am now, though I dare say you will find it hard to believe that, Miss Oakfield; and I have wondered since what it was that made us such friends. Stanton used to growl, and make uncivil observations about it, for I think it puzzled him too; however, friends we were. Well, then followed his court-martial troubles, which I was telling you about the other day, and then at last we came fairly in contact. I could not agree with him then as I do now, but I still admired him, and had a sneaking consciousness that he was right. I heard him abused, for the thing was a good deal talked about, and sometimes I had horrid misgivings about him, which I hate myself now when I think of. On the whole, though, I am glad to remember that I believed and maintained before others that he was not afraid, or anything of that sort; but I believe I made concessions of principle on the other side, which he would have thought worse than my letting him be called a coward. I declare to you, Miss Oakfield, I could be a child when I think of his letters to me at that time in answer to mine, which were, I dare say, suspicious, half unkind, half insolent. Harassed as he was, and conscious of his own courage, so superior to that of all of us put together, he used to write long volumes to me in his own justification, arguing the matter fairly, and gently, and quietly, while I know that to others, who he thought had no right to his confidence, he never condescended to utter a syllable. I loved him more than ever for those letters. Stanton, whom I also corresponded with, and to whom I dare say I expressed some of my insolent doubts, who stood by your brother through the whole business like

a lion, rated me soundly: I loved Stanton for this too; but the contrast between his letters and Ned's made the latter all the more striking to me. By the time the trial was over, I was quite established in the opinion, which I have held ever since, that Oakfield's conduct was not only manful, but most soldier-like, and I have liked the service the less ever since, for the way it treated him. Very soon after, he came to live with me at Simla, and then began an epoch in my life as important to me as that hour upon these stones was to him. But," he said abruptly, "I am going off to my own history, I find, which I fear you will not find so interesting."

Margaret did not answer; but something in her manner must have encouraged him, for he resumed, —

"We lived together, and still in our old way; we never talked on any subject of great importance: I dare say you would be surprised did you know how light the tone of our conversation generally was; and yet I sometimes thought I was more impressed by his levity than other men's seriousness. The fact is, levity was not the word; we had, I think, I am sure he had, a continual consciousness of the existence of deeper interests and sympathies, though shyness or awkwardness, call it what you please, prevented us from making any direct allusion to these, till one evening (how well I remember it!) something happened which opened up afresh the old story of his court-martial, and then we were led on till we became engaged in the very most vital questions of life; and then how his earnestness seemed to overflow! I am sure he did not know, I hardly knew myself at the time, how impressed I was by what passed between us then: I had been used to the ordinary notions of religion, that it was a dry, painful business, though perhaps necessary, quite detached from the ordinary duties and amusements of life, the special property of Sundays, death-beds, and parsons; you may conceive, then, that it was a very gospel to me, to have

that which I had a consciousness I ought not to be without stripped of the narrow limits which had made it appear stupid, if not odious; my whole being awoke, I think, at that time; people talk of conversions, and so on; it is often great folly, I dare say; but there are undoubtedly points in the lives of some of us, which can be at once fixed upon as vitally critical. The change from boyishness to manliness comes sooner or later, at very different times, and in very different ways; to some so gradually that its progress is not perceptible; to others again suddenly, as visible as if accompanied by a tongue of fire or a rushing mighty wind. I think that this conversation which I have been speaking of was such a crisis to me; I was older than your brother, but then for the first time seemed to put away childish things. We parted soon afterwards, and during the campaign were separated; but the sting of our intercourse remained with me, and often during the march and on the picquet, and afterwards on a bed of wakeful pain and sickness, his image was with me, and another image more startling, more impressive, more welcome, — that of myself, of my own long latent being. It is wonderful to wake from the sleep that bounds us in, to an hour or a minute of self-consciousness. Well, we met again at Lahore, and again lived together at Simla, and took up our intercourse, so to speak, at the point where we had left it. I went back to school, a dear schoolmaster, Miss Oakfield, you can easily believe," (Margaret looked quite as if she could,) "and I think we helped in those few months to educate each other. But I owe him an obligation which I can never repay; it was not that he was the first who ever spoke to me of these things; a clergyman, or an uncle, or any one in authority over me, might have preached to me for weeks, and it would, I doubt not, have gone in at one ear and out at the other. I should have thought it very right and proper and natural for them to speak so, and should have

received their good advice in so many set lectures, as I should take a prescription from a doctor, and think about one as much as the other an hour afterwards. But you may imagine how different a thing it was when I found my teacher in a friend, a companion, a brother officer, my junior in years, whom I was first attracted to by a natural liking; when we only came to talk of these things because they had a deep interest for us both, which interest he had perhaps communicated to me without my knowing it, or rather not communicated it, but roused what was already dormant in my own nature; when we learnt to talk of religion, and to begin to think of it as a matter of Monday and Tuesday, and the ride and the parade, as much as Sunday and the church and the sermon; when, in short, I began to feel that God was not an unpleasant, terrible shadow, only restraining me by a vague terror from doing many pleasant things, but a God, who, as he made, so alone gives meaning to existence, to the natural world, to friendship, to love, to man."

He stopped, and they both sat silent for a few moments, encouraging the idea so suggested. An idea of wonderful power! To dissolve and to unite; to dissolve all seeming differences and barriers, and to unite in very closest intimacy of being. When two souls, though it be for a moment, look out together upon God's works and feel that they are his, for that instant at any rate the mysterious earth-born divisions melt away, and a complete, primitive, yet more mysterious unity once again exists; those two souls, while such a vision lasts, are in very deed one. A ringing laugh from one of the little girls, playing in the brook close by, broke the reverie, and Wykham descended to earth again, but still a fairy-like, half-visionary earth: the afternoon sun shone above them with more than the warmth of spring; the pale blue sky, with the white clouds sailing under it, seemed to beckon them on into infinite visions; the babbling stream

danced by them with a mirth worthy of the gods; the sleepy motions of the happy sheep as they grazed upon the mountain turf were the only dull signs of animal life that served to give a quiet reality to what else had been almost too ideal; except when, from time to time, the laughing shouts of the tiny masons, so busily employed in obstructing the passage of the dashing, sparkling waters, peopled this lover's paradise with images of human affection and domestic joy. With a long sigh to relieve his almost oppressive sense of happiness, Wykham continued his history, all old to the reader, but, if not new, most deeply interesting to Margaret.

"We parted, as I told you, on the 15th of October, at Ferozepore; it was not without more emotion than perhaps he thought me capable of, that I saw him left alone, while Stanton went off to his new domestic life, — I to my home in that England which was so seldom out of his thoughts. Poor Ned! as I said before, Miss Oakfield, his life the last five years has been more brave than happy. I thought of all our intercourse; I had a strong consciousness of what he had been to me, but I hated a scene, and so did he; I only said, 'Thank you'; a sufficiently compressed epitome of all and more than all that I have now been saying to you, — I don't know whether he understood it, — and I came away. There; — I meant to give you your brother's history, Miss Oakfield, and with the cunning of egotism I have run off into my own."

"Thank you," said Margaret; and as she looked up, there was a diamond sparkle in her soft brown eye that set Wykham's soul on fire.

"And do you think," he began again, in a tone in which sadness had given place to vehement energy, "that my obligations ended there? O, Miss Oakfield, who knows as well as you that they had but hardly begun? Poor Ned! he little thought that, when he next saw me, I should no

longer be able to give him the first and highest love of my heart, as indeed I did before. O, indeed, if ever he taught me anything, — if my soul has awaked from her long slumber, — if I have gone through the discipline of pain, of suffering, of discomfort, — it was for this hour; that through such teaching I might bring to you a love, pure, earnest, — O Margaret, so deep and true, that I dare not use even the language of flattery to call it unworthy of you. My love *is* worthy, Margaret: it has seen God and lived. I never knew till a few minutes ago, when I looked round upon this lovely scene, and felt how present God is, how infinite, — how eternally rooted my love for you is; — Margaret!"

He stopped, for poor Margaret's diamond sparkles had swollen into a flood; and the tears, as she held her hands before her eyes, were escaping through her small, white fingers. Surely she is not weeping for grief: so thought her lover: he took one of those small hands in his own, and drew it gently and unopposed away from that beautiful countenance, which its fellow now only half concealed.

"Margaret," he almost whispered, "you will finish Edward's lesson; you will be my teacher, my rich blessing, my own, my beloved companion, support, and comforter."

The other hand was withdrawn, and in that upturned face, smiling through tears, he read that answer which prompted him to draw her gently to himself, and imprint the first long, loving, earnest kiss of deep and pure affection upon the lips of his affianced wife.

* * * * *

The sun had set when they entered the garden, but the quick eyes of Mrs. Oakfield, who met them, detected the traces of excitement in her daughter's appearance.

"Margaret, love, you look pale, you have been walking too far."

"No mother," she said, "I think not; O my mother!" she added, "let me come to you."

She put her arms round her mother's neck, and hung there like a little child. Wykham, like a sensible man, walked on and entered the house.

CHAPTER XXI.

"A feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist.

"A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles rain."

LONGFELLOW.

"THIS is delightful!" exclaimed Edward Oakfield, as he sat down to his solitary dinner, in his small quarters at Lahore, with an unopened English letter before him. "He was a wise man who said, 'Sweet is pleasure after pain,' though the pain is severe, it must be owned."

It was the beginning of the burning month of May, and he had spent most of the day in the still more burning atmosphere of cutcherry, engaged in the arduous work of laboring to administer justice in a language with which his ear and tongue were not yet familiar. The overland letters had come in about twelve o'clock; he could not resist the temptation to read that from Leatheburn; he tore it open, and it is to be feared that for the next quarter of an hour the interesting civil action of Dinah *versus* Rhowany Doss (in which the plaintiff sued the defendant for an old debt of five rupees four annas, each party bringing an army of witnesses, who swore stoutly, on their respective sides, to facts diametrically opposite; not content with a single perjury, but, after the custom of Hindoos, calling heaven and earth and all

manner of redundant witnesses to attest their unblushing lie) did not meet with the attention which it deserved. He laid down the letter, when read, with a sigh. "When will the next mail be in?" was his first thought; "now, shall I read Wykham's letter, or keep it till the evening?" The question seemed a hard one; he handled the letter, looked at the postmark, and seemed on the point of opening it, when, with a sudden effort, he put it in his pocket, and turned with a perfect rush of attention to the perjured liar who was giving his evidence. But in the evening virtue was rewarded, when the busy work of the day was over, rid of the crowd that had beset him for so many hours, almost faint from long fasting, he sat down in his own quiet room to his comfortable dinner, with Wykham's long-unread letter on one side, and, by way of reserve, a volume of Carlyle on the other. But when he had read the letter, containing a long account of Herby's Indian freak, and Wykham's successful journey to Winchester, he did not take up the book, but sat thinking for a long time, then ordered the things to be taken away, got his paper-case, and wrote the following letter to Wykham in answer: —

"Lahore, May 5th, 1850.

"My dear Fred: —

"I received, by to-day's mail, your long letter, written from Leatheburn, telling me about poor Herby's wish to come out here. One never answers a letter so fully and graphically as when we sit down within five minutes of reading it, so I mean to try this plan now, for indeed you deserve to be well answered. Dinner is just over; you may easily fancy me in one of these small Annerkullee houses, sitting at my old camp-table, which has gone all over India with me, with a book at each corner of my paper, to prevent its being blown away with the punkah, and your letter, with that dear Leatheburn postmark, before me.

"In the first place, let me thank you, my dear Fred, most heartily, for your very kind and wise treatment of poor Herby.

Indeed it would be a sad disappointment to me if he were to come out here; one of a family is enough for this place of torment: speaking seriously, you know how often we have agreed, that, for one man whose character is refined and strengthened by the fiery furnace of Indian temptation, there are ten who are carried away, withered up, and destroyed by it. It is a risk to which I never wish to see kith or kin of mine exposed. You hint mysteriously at some change in your own fortunes, which may prevent your coming out again. Is this a real probability, or only one of the thoughts which the wish of all men on their first return home so plentifully generates? If the former, India is likely to become a howling wilderness to me; for Middleton talks of going home for good. He has only been sixteen years in the country, but has lived carefully, and has also, since his father's death, had some money of his own. I think he has some idea of trying to get into Parliament. In that case, Stanton alone will be left: a host in himself, you say, and you are right, though neither he nor Middleton can make up to me, dear Fred, for losing you. You will be curious to know how I and my Assistant Commissionership get on, now that we have had a little more experience of each other than when you and I parted on the 15th of October. I hardly know what to say. I like it better than I expected, or rather dislike it less. The actual routine, which I thought would be so very difficult, has become easy, as you assured me it would, as all routines do, though it is hard to believe they will when contemplated from the distance of utter ignorance. The language was my great difficulty, is still, and I think always will be. I don't mean to say that I am worse off than my neighbors in this respect, but I think *they* are worse off than they often allow. I am sure that there are very few men to whom a foreign language, however familiar from study and experience, becomes as complete a servant as their own, as for judicial purposes is so desirable. There are shades of meaning which we often lose, not so much in hearing as in speaking, by that cowardly instinct which makes us substitute a feeble but familiar, for a more vigorous and obscure word. I do not wish to exaggerate the importance of this. Eloquence is by no means an essential attribute to a judge, but it is always a most effective adunct, especially with Asiatics; and there are very few Europeans,

even amongst those who are justly called excellent linguists, who can be really eloquent in Ordoo or Persian; they must think too much of their instrument for the effect to be very great. But, on the whole, I dislike the work less than I expected; and the actual labor I feel, as I knew I should, most beneficial; not for my health perhaps, which is never good, and sometimes very bad, (you need not mention this at Leatheburn,) but to my intellect certainly, which seems to work better and more freely at all points for having so much heavier a strain upon it. And the method and regularity which business necessitates are always a wholesome check to my indolent nature. Then, on the other hand, there is the Charybdis which we are apt to run upon while steering clear of Scylla; the danger of becoming a mere machine; of becoming a 'first-rate officer,' as it is called, and ceasing to be a man. I am sometimes startled to find how full my whole mind and imagination become of my business, and then the spirit of the world is ever at hand to infect all with his blighting curse. In this difficulty you may understand how I have learned to value the Sunday, a day when I try completely to give myself up to the ideal, that is, the only real; and shun, as profane, every thought of the material and the actual. I once used to talk very unwisely about the Sunday; I am now no more than then a fourth commandment man, but I do most heartily admire and acknowledge the wisdom of a day of rest. Even now, Sunday draughts of ether can scarcely counteract weekly contact with a grosser atmosphere; one day of Wordsworth, or Shakespeare, or that other, greater book than all, — of quiet thought upon the wonders that are above, beneath, and on every side, — of life and death, — of God and the soul, — can hardly give that firm faith which shall resist six days of sapping intercourse with the world, — shall impart the liberty of infinite truth to those most finite details which are else so apt to degenerate into bondage. You will not think that I mean we should take in enough religion on Sundays to last through the week, like a steam-engine getting supplies of water to carry it on to the next station; but I am sure that in life, where so much of our time is necessarily given up to dealings with the most commonplace present, to hearing merely worldly interests insisted upon with all the importance of officiality, it is very necessary (at least to those who do

not feel their faith far stronger than is the position of most of us) to have set and frequent periods wherein to shake ourselves, to open our eyes, and see how things really do stand; that the justice which we do well to be so busily engaged with all the week is still in itself but a poor and gross emblem of that eternal truth and justice with which it is too often our monstrous error to confound it. I am certain that all this is of great practical importance, though it may perhaps sound vague and mystical. The effect of mistaking a lower for a higher good is very sadly visible in all our Indian government. The lower good is so much higher than the highest of many other governments, that we may be thankful even for this; I do believe that there are few, if any, governments in the world so vigorous, and yet (in the common sense of the term) so just and so liberal, as that of the East India Company; and yet few or none in so bad a way. Stanton would abuse me for being paradoxical; but I may indulge myself with you who are at a safe distance, and more courteous withal than our beloved bear. What I am going to say may be a humbug, but it has the merit of being, at any rate, a well-digested, deliberately believed humbug. The Indian government seems to me to be in a less hopeful and promising condition than any other, because, while its practice is perhaps better, its principles are worse. In most civilized countries there is, generally at least, a partially recognized idea of the higher and spiritual ends in government, in human life, whether social or individual. And this is what I call the higher truth, as distinguished from that lower one which our government in this country seems alone to recognize. In practice most states fall below even the lower good; but, for the most part, the profession of belief in something higher than protection to life and property and revenue collection is acknowledged amongst them; and even this is something. But we in India have not this. Those *beaver tendencies* which Carlyle speaks of as characterizing Englishmen of the present day, are not only followed too far in our practice, but, as it would seem, their perfection is our highest idea. Our government is purely secular; and thus, while there can be no doubt of the very great relief which British rule has given to this country, though it is certain that there is a growing desire to treat the natives well, to improve the country physically, to im-

prove the courts of justice, and so on, and though I fully admit that these are great blessings, (a great deal more than can be said for most governments,) yet I maintain that, to a government that has no higher idea than all this, the words 'great' and 'noble' are misapplied. There is an utter want of nobleness in the government of India; it still retains the mark of its commercial origin; we see every year, in England, the evils of a merely commercial spirit, developing themselves in selfishness, in coarseness, in cowardly shrinking from brave endurance. In England this is partly counteracted by other influences; but here it is counteracted by nothing but the good which undoubtedly is contained, together with the evil, in itself. The good, as has been said a thousand times, is great; it consists in vigor, force, energy, a terrestrial justice, infinitely better than lawless rapine and a politic benevolence; but the evil, though less talked about, is great also, and no less certainly exists. The evil is a money-getting, earthly mind, that dares to view a large portion of God's world, and many millions of God's creatures, as a more or less profitable investment, as a good return for money laid out upon them, as a providential asylum for younger sons. It is curious to observe how this commercial spirit, so predominant in Anglo-India in the aggregate, manifests itself in the component individuals. Here of course there are exceptions; but the tendency sets all this way. Take the majority of officials in this country: their vigor, their strong sense, their prompt and business-like dexterity, have earned for them, as a class, a justly honorable distinction. These are what may be called the commercial virtues. But except good men of business what are they? Many of the most famous men in India, now and in former days, have had none but an official life; good and honest and intelligent men of business; but alas! when I add to this, devout, godly, reverent servants of Heaven, are you not almost inclined to smile? The Indian government is perhaps the best, the most perfect, nay, perhaps the only specimen of pure, professing secularism that the civilized world has ever seen since the Christian era; and sometimes, when our eyes are open to see things as they are, such a secularism does appear a most monstrous phenomenon to be stalking through God's world, not the less so that it happened to have four legs to go upon. It is not missionaries that

we want to remedy this state of things. Secularism is ever ready to pay missionaries to any amount, and then complacently to button up its breeches pocket, and go on its way rejoicing. But you may land fleet-loads of missionaries at Calcutta, and they will pass innocently through the length and breadth of the land, having about as much influence with the Europeans as the natives, than which a more utter negation of all quantity can hardly be conceived. No amount of orthodox Sunday services will break the force of the spirit of commerce; indeed, this apparatus dares not attack that which is the real enemy, but goes off to a hundred other merely fancied ones, enemies of straw, which it may set up, and have the fun of knocking down again, to all eternity, and take nothing by the motion; the truth must come to us by other channels; our great hope, I do believe, is the spirit which seems quite lately to have gone abroad in Europe, and especially in England, where poetry and philosophy do seem to be once more beginning to assert themselves in opposition to mere selfish covetousness, and where good men appear to be learning to venture to call things by their real names, and to look what God makes in the face, and receive it as it is, instead of trying to square it away to some orthodox preconceived pattern of their own. When this spirit of philosophy and poetry and godliness shall move across the world, and begin to dawn even upon the Englishmen in the East, — when the philosophical reformer shall come out here as Governor-General, — then the spirit of Mammon may tremble for its empire, but not till then. We have seen in France the evil of a professed regard for abstract ideas magnified into idolatry, an idolatry false of course, and ruinous in its effects; but its opposite, which is the sin of this country, cannot be considered much better; nay, even more degraded, if one species of idolatry can be a more degraded lie than another. You have no notion how seducing this influence, on every side, is. It becomes necessary to force myself to repeat continually the commonest facts, that God made and makes the world, — Asia as well as Europe, — that I and all men, black as well as white, have immortal souls, and also bodies, that will die in some thirty or forty years; or else the cutcherry work would soon degenerate into a gross and degrading mechanism.

"My Deputy Commissioner is a very pleasant, agreeable man, and few could be better able, I fancy, to teach me the necessary rudiments; but of course I wish sometimes that I could have been at Ferozepore, under Middleton, the only man I think I have seen in the country to whom I could really look up. Does this sound like conceit? I am so certain that it is *not*, that I have no scruple in saying it. I have met with many men in this country far better and more self-denying in their practice than I am, and I have met with very many who I know perfectly well are far cleverer men than I am, more able to do things, quicker, more ready, more ingenious, more energetic. But I really cannot call to mind any man except Middleton who has, combined with an intellect to which my own has completely bowed itself, an earnest, serious insight into life; and I cannot look up to the ablest man in the world, not to one who shall combine in himself the *intellectual* faculties of Plato, Shakespeare, and Sir Isaac Newton, if I feel that in spite of all this I can at any time look upon the green earth or upon the starry sky, and see in them more than he does, — that in fifty years at latest I shall have cut him out. But I will end my letter with more restful thoughts. This is my resting-time in the twenty-four hours, and how thoroughly I do enjoy it! Let me compose and soften myself before I go to bed, with the thoughts of you and Leatheburn; though, by the by, I do not suppose you can be there now. But you have seen it, Fred, and you have seen those whom I feel I am destined always to love best upon earth, and you can conceive what my longing to return has sometimes been. You may imagine how, in times of storm and difficulty and pain, I have longed for that haven of peace and love; how I have left the society of Brooks or Straddles, to think of my beloved mother and family; have closed my eyes upon the dusty hideousness of Ferozepore, to try and conjure up the image of Helvellyn and Thirlwater. It is an allowable joy, dear Fred, so to muse, but it must not weaken us for work. Were all life one peaceful sojourn at Leatheburn, it would no longer be a hard and sorrowful battle-field. God bless you, dear Fred, and strengthen us to work while it is day, and for our rest, to look forward, not to furlough, which death or poverty may rob us of, but to the peaceful night, which, if we may wait for it, will surely come.

Good night. I have just shouted for my bearer, and am going to bed.

"Ever yours,

"Edward Oakfield."

If the reader is inclined to object, that the assertions in the above letter are too sweeping and general, let him remember that this is the natural failing of a young man on first entering into life; that he looks round, and, not observing the intricate maze in which good and evil lie so closely intertwined, sees only, as he thinks, two main divisions, and in the freshness of his zeal lauds the one and condemns the other with a dogmatical heartiness which he is only too certain to learn, after a very little experience, to qualify. It is well if, while in after years he learns to be more discreet, he does not also become more lukewarm. Oakfield worked very hard, and there was no danger of his not being interested in his work. And yet it was a painful interest; it required a continual effort of faith to counteract the degrading spectacle which he witnessed every day in his court. It was hard to believe that there could be any foundation of human sympathy between himself and those men who, for the sake of a rupee, would, without the smallest scruple, without the faintest sign of shame or compunction when detected, lie on with an unblushing, unwearying effrontery. He asked Mr. Middleton about this; his answer was, "That the lying of natives in the courts of justice was not to be denied, nor certainly to be excused; and yet," Mr. Middleton wrote, "there is this to be said, that they themselves regard lying to a European magistrate much in the same light as some schoolboys regard lying to a master; a low and wretched and false principle, certainly; and yet we should probably think worse of a boy who told a gross lie to his companions and equals, in spite of every injunction of boy morality and honor, than of him who lied to his master with little or no

sense of violating either. So it is with natives; follow them into their villages, it has been often said, and you will find that, when collected under the village trees in the presence of the village elders, they will tell the truth even against their interests; and shame and reproof from those around him will light upon the detected liar. It is certain that boys may be taught a higher principle of truthfulness, nay, that they have been: — I hear that in the great public schools in England the gross notion of its being fair to deceive a master, (which certainly prevailed in my time at the school I was at,) is quite exploded. I see no reason why it should be otherwise in time with those older, but still feebler children, with whom we have to deal. After all, I believe that even now truth is so much stronger than falsehood, that in most cases it manages, somehow or other, to assert itself; and for the rest you must be patient, and live in hope. Above all, do not be disgusted, but stick, at all hazards, to your newly learned doctrine, that men are better than they seem."

And so Oakfield tried to do. He worked very hard at the unwelcome, irksome details of his business, and at the same time endeavored to keep in mind that the crowds who thronged his court daily were not merely suitors, plaintiffs, defendants, witnesses, but also *men;* that the cases he disposed of were not merely official transactions, to be recorded, decided, and appealed upon, but were each the plot of so many dramas, exciting interests, hopes, fears, in so many homes and villages, which he never witnessed, but which existed none the less. This gave a human interest to his proceedings that was as a salt of vitality, preventing them from becoming dry, dead, and unprofitable; from degenerating (to use an expressive modern phrase) into red-tapism. It gave too a fresh, unwonted vigor to his new official routine, and he soon earned the reputation of being a very promising

civil officer, even among those who were little enough able to guess what was the root from which this promise was developing itself. In fact, Oakfield found that for civil employ as well as military, for cutcherry as well as the field of battle, the fear of God was still, as much as it ever had been in the old times, a power which nothing could withstand, beating the worldly men on their own ground, and expatiating besides, on higher grounds, the very existence of which, in their philosophy, was never dreamt of. He admired and wished to learn from the wisdom of the children of the Indian world: he admired and heartily sought to use and imitate the vigor which marked almost all the departments of the public service: he found the God of prudence and understanding worshipped, and he wished to join such worship to that of the God of reason and faith: he found everywhere a wise tendency to recognize and allow for material facts; he wished to do the same, but not with foolish inconsistency to ignore invisible spiritual facts, — to behave as if *they* had no existence. He corresponded with Mr. Middleton, who often talked of retiring, and sometimes expressed a wish that he could be in Parliament when the next discussion on the charter came on. "Not," he wrote, "that I expect there will be much of importance done at this next renewal; and indeed I hope not; for the ignorance about India is so enormous, that they would too probably only meddle with those things which should be let alone, and *vice versâ*. From what I hear, too, I should be afraid that people in England would be too apt to transfer the reforms and remedies required for their own country to us out here; whereas our complaints are essentially different, and so must be their treatment. Pauperism, for instance, is, I suppose, the one absorbing difficulty to an English statesman, including in the term pauperism all the manifold evils which lead to and spring out of it; and so an intelligent friend of mine

who is engaged night and day, in his Lancashire manufacturing home, with this fearful mesh of problems, wrote to me not long ago to know 'what poor-law provisions we had out here.' It was a very natural question; yet you, and I, and anybody who has been a year in India, with his eyes open, feel inclined to smile at it. And why? Because we happen to know that pauperism does not exist; or rather, if you like, that it exists so universally as to cease to be regarded as an evil. In ordinary years nobody starves, and the whole population lives at the rate of eight shillings per man per month. In extraordinary years, — such as the great famine year, 1837, shortly after I came out, — the whole country starved together, and then, by way of special poor-law for the nonce, the government remitted the whole revenue for the year. It is an acute evil in this country, sent by a special dispensation of God, which no poor-laws in the world could remedy. In England it is a chronic evil, which I suppose the political economists would say God had nothing at all to do with; which I should call a dispensation of God no less than the other, but different in this, that it results in great measure from ordinary foreseeable causes which human interference can prevent or modify. The difficulty returns to us in another form; millions live at the rate of eight shillings per man per month, and are quite contented; but what a thing it is that they should be contented! If we wished to state the difference in the most striking way, we might say, discontent is the mischief in England, content in India. In England how is the demand to be supplied? In India how is the demand (the first step in civilization) to be created? On the whole, then, I hope that they will let us very much alone: it would be useful if some influential sensible witness from India could be there to point out the immediate reforms urgently wanted: such as a very large increase of officers, that there might be an end to such

absurd anomalies as one man being appointed, and professing, to do the whole revenue, judicial, and executive work of a district of some hundreds of miles in extent; not only cruelly wasting the life and powers of the European officials, but driving the natives away from tribunals so overcrowded that they know it is physically impossible for them to obtain a sufficient hearing: this only requires thorough exposure to be altered; but, beyond some such points as this, the less the House of Commons meddle the better. There is more vigor and as much honesty in our government as in Downing Street, I believe.* The one reform above all others which we want, is better men; a better class to be sent out: older, better educated, carefully selected. The Indian officer's progress (civil and military) has now too often but two or three stages, — child, foolish, profligate, respectable man of the world. We get shiploads of physical courage, and more or less sufficient intelligence every year: what we want in addition to these is a few bushels of thoughtfulness; of pure, unselfish, nay, if you will, even visionary enthusiasm."

Meanwhile the secret which Oakfield had communicated to Wykham in his letter, viz. the threatened return of his own illness, could no longer be kept a secret. He still struggled on, being unwilling to throw up his work so soon after coming to it, in order to go to the hills on leave. But he made that common mistake which has killed and does kill so many in India; he clung on in the hope of the cold weather coming, and making it unnecessary for him to go away; the consequence was, that in August he became so ill (so dangerously ill at one time that Mr. Middleton came over from Ferozepore to see him) that he had to go away, — not to Simla, but to England. His heart leaped up within him

* It must be remembered that Mr. Middleton was writing under the reign of the Russell ministry.

when he first heard the sentence; and then he thought of his work, and begged to go to the hills instead. But the doctor was immovable; a sea voyage and a long respite from Indian climate, was the only thing that could restore him; go he must, and for three years. And now poor Oakfield allowed himself to give way to the home prospect: his fate once decided, he turned away resolutely from his opening career of credit and distinction in India, and prepared for his journey. He set out in the very beginning of October; stopped a few days at Mr. Middleton's, and there too he met Stanton (whose troop was still at Ferozepore) and his wife. It was a touching thing to them when they parted; they remembered their previous meetings in the same house and station, which last had been the theatre of such important events to all of them: the bustle of Oakfield's court-martial, their reunion after the campaign, and Stanton's marriage; and their former common associations with the place contrasted strangely with their present state of settled calm retrospection.

"Do you remember, Mrs. Stanton," Oakfield asked, "when I used to come and drink tea every morning in the verandah, long before you knew that fellow?" pointing to her husband.

"O yes! I remember it; but it seems ages ago."

"I fancy," said Stanton (when the hour of parting came), more sentimentally than was his wont, "that our Indian set is pretty well broken up."

"What, the Ferozepore school," rejoined Oakfield, laughing, "or young India, — which will you have? Yes, old fellow; and now I must be off, and when I get out of this place, my ties with this country will be pretty well severed, and I shall only have to make the best of my way home. Good by, good by, God bless you all!" and he hurried off as

Wykham had done almost exactly a year before, from the same house, bound in the same direction."

"Poor Mr. Oakfield," said Mrs. Stanton, as they stood looking after his retreating palki, "he is an old friend, Henry, for India, is he not? I wonder when we shall see him again."

"An old friend," assented her brother, in a tone of still, but most deep emotion; "God bless him! we shall see him in heaven."

She started and looked round, and read plainly in the countenances of both her husband and brother that they had in their hearts wished Edward Oakfield good by for ever.

Oakfield left Ferozepore on the 10th of October; he travelled by dâk the whole way to Calcutta, which place he reached in a fortnight. He took up his abode at Spence's Hotel, for his friend at Garden Reach had left the country some time before. It seemed but a few months since he had gone to Spence's with Stanton the first evening he landed, and now, after five eventful years, he was on the point of disembarking, to return to England with a shattered constitution. He had acquired much experience, certainly, in that long interval; and, looking back, felt to have grown very much older; and yet to be as far as ever from having solved the difficulty which had then beset him. He had indeed earned a position in society of credit and respectability, but he knew that it did not require very much to attain to this. He had more than once put himself in contact with the world, but these had been but isolated efforts, hardly worth, so it seemed, the agitation and discomposure which they had cost. He had served both in a military and civil calling with zeal and diligence, and had gilded the service with such words as duty, state of life in which Heaven had placed him, and so on; but were these indeed Heaven's work; was God indeed glorified in them; or were they but

part of that restless, meaningless agitation with which earth's children are ever, with a pompous, assumed importance, disquieting themselves; and was there, after all, no wisdom in the world, but in a retired philosophical contemplation, varied only by labors of the most direct and obvious charity? Poor Oakfield! Wykham must have said truly that life had been no merry game for him, if these doubts had still haunted him, and were not answered yet. It is to be believed that there are many in these days like him; many of the best and the ablest, who, year by year, shrink back from taking any share in the world's government, because they feel that such labor has long been hopelessly committed to the spirit of worldliness, to anarchy, to atheism. They fall back into an inner spiritual circle, whose contracted limits they themselves are the readiest to acknowledge, the most earnest to lament, leaving more active and what are called more important pursuits to those whose keener faith and insight enable them to discern the real and the divine, though covered over with never so many disguises; or to those — far more numerous — who, with duller consciences, worship the disguises themselves, bestow all their energy, all their faith, all their love, upon these.

Oakfield had to appear before the Medical Board to get his certificate confirmed. Having passed through this ordeal, he sallied forth straightway, and drove in his hired buggy to the office of the "Peninsular and Oriental Company," and took a berth in the overland steamer "Haddington," to sail on the 8th, that very day week. The seven intervening days were occupied in making arrangements with outfitters, the military fund people, &c., &c., and perhaps chiefly in castle-building. He had written from Ferozepore to tell his friends that he should probably be at home in December, and now he wrote another short letter to go by the same steamer as himself as far as Malta, and then to strike off

viâ Marseilles, and reach England only four days before its writer. Again reminiscences crowded almost overpoweringly upon Oakfield as he closed this, his last Indian letter, and then thought of his first; which he well remembered writing the very day after his landing, full of his first impressions of the new life which had now become so familiar to him.

He had met at Spence's the person who was to share his cabin in the steamer, and was glad to find him a quiet, gentlemanly man. Captain Robbins, who, like himself and so many others, was returning to England on sick leave, broken down by fifteen consecutive years of Indian sun.

The eventful 8th arrived; Oakfield and Captain Robbins drove down together about seven in the morning to the ghat where the steamer was lying. It was a fine day, of course, but still hot even in November, mid-winter being the only time when Calcutta is for a few weeks reasonably cool. Oakfield had seen no shipping since the day he landed, and, as he set foot on deck, looked up at the smoking funnel, heard the buzzing gurgle of the nascent steam, listened to the strange, homelike shouts, "Malta," "Gibraltar," "Southampton," as the mail-boxes were brought on board, looked at the directions of the various packages which lay about the ship, containing the names of remote English country villages, English towns and counties, he felt the spell of his exile dissolve itself within him, and perceptibly entered upon another phase of existence.

The bell rings, the pale-faced men and women who have accompanied their home-bound friends to the ship now move off, a dolorous troop, to return listlessly to their desks and counting-houses in that hot, painful city, which it is to be feared will appear distasteful enough to them to-day, after thus standing as it were for an hour or two upon the threshold of home. Again the bell rings, the pilot and the captain have taken their stand upon the paddle-box: the former

slowly raises his hand, a small, sharp-looking boy posted at the hatchway leading down into the engine-rooms sees the signal, and with a quick indifferent shout communicates its import to the inmates of the glowing den beneath. Those swarthy inmates hear and obey; the shrill scream of the escaping steam ceases, Oakfield rushes to the side and sees the huge wheel slowly revolve; then, as the great ship glides away, he watches the scarcely receding shore; the wheels turn more quickly, stirring up the bubbling yeasty waters, and raising in the ship's wake that trail of rolling waves that is to follow them home; small boats toiling up the river seem to fly past them, animated with their own speed; Garden Reach and its deadly verdure is passed; the passengers turn to look once more at the City of Palaces, but it is gone; and they are gliding down between the quiet banks of the sacred Hooghley, already three miles on their way to England.

They had started at ten o'clock; about noon, just as, with that readiness which never fails an English society, they were settling naturally into the feelings and habits of voyagers, the steamer from England came in sight: the speed was slackened, the crews of both ships manned the rigging and exchanged hearty cheers as they passed each other. Oakfield tried to join in those friendly huzzas, but his heart and his voice failed him; he went behind the wheel and looked after the other ship, more disposed to weep than to cheer. What hopes and fears were being borne on to their near fulfilment! what histories of most thrilling interest were being acted there, in anxious expectation of the new chapter so soon to open! There were the sailors returning to Calcutta for the hundredth time, looking at every object with the careless eye of custom, and only glad to have their voyage done: there was the old Indian returning with pleasure to the land of curries, marring his own enjoyment by fe-

verish speculations as to what appointment he would get, and whether so and so would have superseded him in his absence; there was the wife returning to her husband, to share with him the pain of separation from the beloved children she has left behind her; there are the young ladies coming out to their parents, or brothers, or uncles, viewing everything, some with intelligence, some, it is to be feared, with an inquisitive, insipid feebleness; and there, too, God help them! are the griffs; — O, how Oakfield's heart was filled with sympathy for them! Some indeed were probably in little want of sympathy; coarse, thoughtless, foolish, as ready to take the road to perdition in India as they would have been in England; others sanguine, bold, ambitious, crowding to the vessel's bows with eager interest to catch the first glance of what has so long been the land of their dreams and fancies; others, again, trying to veil an aching heart (poor boys, it seems to them well-nigh a broken one!) under a garb of manliness, of indifference, of recklessness; and some few looking upon all things with a piteous vacancy that proclaims them to belong to that class of characterless victims who are the Devil's first, and favorite, and easiest prey; but all, probably, more or less hopeful, more or less anxious. What a depth of fathomless interest was centred in each individual case! and regarded more generally, here was another instalment of English power; a fresh supply of that material from which the soldiers and statesmen of India were to be formed. What generals, what council members, what governors, may that ship contain! but then once more Oakfield turned in thought to the higher interest, and added, as indeed the most wonderful climax, what men!

The Haddington continued her voyage, and anchored that evening at the Sandheads; the next morning the pilot went off, taking with him Oakfield's last official communication to the government of India, the report of his departure on the

8th of November by the P. O. S. N. Co.'s ship Haddington, for Europe, on medical certificate. Once more he determined that he would set foot on Indian ground. They reached Madras on the third day, and he went ashore in one of the masullah boats, through the tossing surf. The steamer was to start again at sunset. Shortly before that time he came on board, and, while the anchor was being weighed, stood watching that wonderful country, of which he had now taken his last farewell. Parting will make us kindly disposed even to those persons and places which we have loved the least. His Indian life passed slowly in review before him, and he owned he was not a little indebted to that country whose purple shores were fast fading from his view in the increasing darkness. There lay the Indian empire, the greatest wonder of the world; there reposed those hostile races whose struggles had been ended in common submission to the stronger foreign stranger; there that English community was eating and drinking, and sleeping and laughing, heedless or unconscious of their own miraculous position, and the enormous responsibility that burdened it: there too within those shores were his own friends, Stanton and Middleton; and there slept the young boy whom he had left on the banks of the Ganges; there lay India, teeming, like every other part of the world, with its million of individual human interests, passions, and sufferings; the history of which, as a nation, had had its beginning in marvel, and of which all ask, and none can tell, what the end shall be.

So mused Oakfield; and with a long deep sigh of thankfulness, of penitence, of hope, of joy, of sorrow, of all emotion, he took his last look over the dark, calm sea, and at the intermittent flashes of the Madras light, now the only object visible from the shore, and went below, but before he slept, uttered a fervent prayer for that country which he should never see again.

CHAPTER XXII.

"O dream of joy! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see?
Is this the hill? Is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countrie?"

COLERIDGE.

"Hame, hame, hame; hame fain wad I be,
O hame, hame, hame to my ain countrie!
When the flower is i' the bud, and the leaf is on the tree,
The larks shall sing me hame in my ain countrie;
Hame, hame, hame; hame fain wad I be,
O hame, hame, hame to my ain countrie!"

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

THE Haddington continued her voyage in great prosperity over a mirror-like sea. The weather was delightful, the days sunny, cloudless, warm, but not oppressive, the nights just cold enough to make a blanket welcome. On the 15th of November, the seventh day of their voyage, they came in sight, about six o'clock in the morning, of the fairy-like island of Ceylon.

As they approached and saw those bright emerald woods in the foreground, with the red hoofs of the tiny houses peeping out of them, more like a highly colored and varnished card-board picture than a part of the actual every-day world, the harbor lying with its unruffled surface like an inland lake, fringed with the gray green of the cocoa-trees, while in the distant background rose up ranges of blue wavy mountains,

it was not hard to people this scene with the fancy forms of Hindoo mythology; an army of monkeys might easily be imagined advancing to the attack, and finding a rich spoil in the cocoa forest.

They left Ceylon on the same evening, and began the longest stage of their overland voyage, standing right across the Arabian Gulf for the Straits of Babelmandeb. That same night, as Oakfield stood by the bowsprit watching the strange stars, which in those latitudes cluster round the Southern Cross, his meditations were suddenly broken in upon by a loud voice exclaiming, in a well-known tone, "Well, Mr. Oakfield! here you are at last." Oakfield turned to look at the speaker; he supposed that all the passengers had been in bed; these midnight musings of his had always been undisturbed by any human presence, save that of the silent, watching sailors.

He himself used, at this time, to leave a bed where he could not sleep, and, wrapping himself in the Scotch plaid which had done like duty on his first voyage to India, in which he had slept before now, and hoped perhaps to sleep again, upon the side of Helvellyn, would walk, or sit, or lie down in different parts of the ship, building his castles and exercising his thoughts beneath the kindly teaching of the silent sky and the "wide glimmering sea." He turned to look at the person who had addressed him; the moon, within three days of the full, shed a bright pure light upon a countenance and figure that spoke little of brightness or of purity. He recognized the man instantly; the seedy black clothes looked seedier, the red, dissipated face more dissipated, the coarse sandy hair involved in wilder tangles by the accumulated matting of four years of uncultivated vegetation, the gray, twinkling eye seemed to have had much of its moist humor clouded by the mists of a growing sensuality; but that face and that Irish voice could belong to no other

than his steamer acquaintance, the friend of his poor, dear papa, — Malone.

"Where did you spring from? I had no notion you were on board."

"I dare say not, sir, for I am where I believe no one would think of looking for a Malone; I am a second-class passenger, sir; there, — you know it all."

"I am sorry that circumstances should oblige you to travel uncomfortably, Mr. Malone," replied Oakfield, who could not bring himself, however, to regard it as any very tremendous calamity; "but I still wonder that I have not met you, for I have been in this part of the ship almost every night."

"Ah! you see I have been in my bed for these seven days; for the real fact is I have been cruel bad with the sea-sickness, Mr. Oakfield."

"You must be a bad sailor; for we have had the sea like a mill-pond the whole way; well, but did you know I was on board? You spoke just now as if you did."

"Ah, bless you, yes; I know the name of every creature on board."

Oakfield could not help smiling as he recognized this old trait, indulged even in spite of sea-sickness and cabin imprisonment.

"Well, but, Mr. Malone, why didn't you send for me if you were ill, and if you knew I was on board?"

"Why, you know, young gentlemen are proud sometimes, and I thought you might not like your friends to know you came to see a second-class passenger."

"I am very much obliged to you for thinking me a very contemptible puppy," replied Oakfield.

"No, no," said the other, hastily, "I knew you would n't feel so really, but then I was n't sure; for after all, the Oakfields of Leatheburn have a right to be proud if any have."

"Do you still maintain, Mr. Malone, that I am the fortunate possessor of £2,000 a year?"

The other laughed in an awkward, half-abashed way; it was evident that he had fallen terribly in the world, and, consequently, in his own estimation, since he had patronized Oakfield, and tried to hold him up as his friend, the landed proprietor, on board the river steamer.

"No, no; but I suppose you are really going home to live at Leatheburn?"

"To live upon nothing for the rest of my life? No, I am going home on sick certificate."

"Ah! you look ill; awful country! I was nearly a dead man myself after I saw you; I travelled all over the three presidencies on a tattoo, at the rate of fifty miles a day, sleeping under trees or in the serais; I killed about three tattoos, but could n't kill myself, though God knows I should not much have minded changing places with the poor dead beasts at times."

There was something in the despair with which this was said, and the broken-down, forlorn appearance of one whom he remembered so flaunting and self-confident, which touched Oakfield. He hardly knew, however, what to say; for he knew nothing of his companion's business, or circumstances, or prospects; and on all these points Mr. Malone was as reserved as ever. He confessed, indeed, that he was hard up, and hinted that he had lost his engagement with some newspaper establishment; and probably Oakfield was not far wrong in setting him down as a poor literary adventurer, who had wandered about the world all his life ministering to men's excitements, and now was about to reap, in a premature old age, the fruits of so ignominious a service. A man who had been used to writing flashy articles, first in English, then in Indian newspapers, for his bread; using the terms duty, principle, and conscience with the free indifference of a paid hack, till the great names, so often on his lips and at his finger ends, were dead in his heart; and

while he seemed to take an interest in — nay, believed himself interested in — the "cause of the Church," "the cause of missionary labor," "the cause of the aristocracy," "the cause of the press," cared in truth for nothing; and tried to supply the utter vacuum of such an existence by the temporary excitements of debauchery.

Oakfield was moved with compassion, and said, on the impulse of the moment, "Can I do anything for you in England?" An instant afterwards he was sorry he had asked the question: he knew he *could* do nothing, and had probably taken on his own shoulders a burden that would stick like the Old Man of the Sea. He was relieved, therefore, when Mr. Malone answered, "No, sir; no, thank you. If ever I do come to England again, I shall remember your offer, but I leave you at Aden."

"At Aden!" exclaimed Oakfield; then thought, "what a place in all the world for a ruined man to go to for the purpose of retrieving his fortunes!"

Mr. Malone saw his surprise, and muttered something about having an interest in the hotel there; which left Oakfield under the impression that he was going to turn innkeeper; perhaps the thousandth speculation which this Protean man had tried in the course of his multifarious life. Oakfield had several conversations with him before they reached Aden, and was much impressed with the pathetic sight of the wreck of a fellow-man. Malone himself gave up more and more entirely the old slang, and free and easy manner; talked no more of Oakfield's poor, dear papa, though he seemed to take a humanizing pleasure in recurring to the period of his own intercourse with him in the days of his respectability; and when the ship anchored at Aden, he said to Oakfield, —

"The fact is, sir, the proprietor of the hotel here is a sort of cousin of mine, and when I was a ruined man, so help me

God, Mr. Oakfield, nearer actual starvation than perhaps any Cambridge graduate ever yet was, I wrote to him (by token I had n't money to pay the letter inland, and walked to Madras to post it there), and he behaved like an Irishman, and told me to come to him; and here I am, and I suppose the descendant of all the Malones must turn waiter or boots; and now, Mr. Oakfield, I 'll make free, before I leave the only respectable friend I have in the world, to ask the loan of a sovereign."

Oakfield could have smiled at the feeling which prompted the use of the word loan: he was able, however, and most willing to give the poor man five pounds; and with an earnest wish, but little hope, of his well-doing, shook hands with him, and watched him as he went over the side, and (being already almost himself again in the possession of five pounds) ordered about the boatmen in his old style of happy Irish insolence; his very brogue seeming to spring up, phœnix-like, under the golden shower. Malone vanished from Oakfield's sight, and in a few lines he must vanish from ours also.

About eight months after, as Mr. Middleton was sitting at breakfast at Ferozepore, he was told that a "Sahib" wanted to speak to him. Going out, he found the person, twice described, of Mr. Malone; it was evident that he had fallen upon his legs once more; the misfortune, the starvation, the pathos, which, when Oakfield parted with him at Aden, had seemed to give some hope for the man, were all gone, and he was again the loud, sanguine, hypocritical, insolent Irishman. He wanted Mr. Middleton to support a new paper, which he proposed editing under the imposing title of the *Cis-Sutlej Gazette*.

"I knew, by the by," Mr. Malone said, "a friend of yours; a young man called Oakfield."

"Hah!" said Mr. Middleton, with a sudden interest,

which the eulogy upon the *Cis-Sutlej Gazette* had failed to awaken; "when did you know him?"

"Sure, Mr. Middleton, did n't I meet him five years ago, on the Ganges, in the same steamer as yourself; and then I was on the overland with him going to Aden. A good family he belongs to, but I fear he 'll never be worthy of it; he was but a tame, poor-spirited young chap."

"Sir," interrupted Mr. Middleton, sternly, "you are foolishly mistaken."

Mr. Malone wished to retract directly he saw how the land lay, but, perceiving he made no progress, took a speedy departure. Mr. Middleton went back to his breakfast; Mr. Malone went — reader, we know not where; but take our word for it that he still wanders up and down the earth with the curse of sensuality and servility upon him; and that the first number of the *Cis-Sutlej Gazette* has not yet made its appearance.

To return to our narrative. The Haddington had a good passage down the Red Sea; the weather was still calm, and clear, and beautiful. Oakfield continued his forecastle vigils without any fear of interruption. On the night of the 1st of December they crossed the spot to which tradition assigns the passage of the Israelities. Oakfield, of course, took the tradition for no more than it was worth; yet it was an awful thing to look over the sea at the dark horizon, and think that there lay Mount Sinai, where God had in very truth appeared and spoken with the sound of the thunder and the voice of words unto his people; that there was the shore where the Heaven-preserved host had landed, and Miriam and her fellows had played upon the timbrels, saying, "Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea"; that near here, at any rate, was the place where the waters had rolled back and been a wall

upon this side, and a wall upon that, while the chosen race — a wandering band of emigrants, let the scoffing antiquarian tell us, but let us rather say, with a truer wisdom, a more prudent faith, the chosen seed, the royal priesthood, the peculiar people, carrying with them the destinies of an unconscious world — passed through on dry land, which the Egyptians assaying to do, perished, and were drowned in the depths of the sea.

With break of day our sleepless traveller was again on deck; the contracting shores and the red cliffs marked strikingly both the shape of the Red Sea and the obvious geological peculiarity from which it derives its name. The ship went on, and by eleven o'clock on the morning of the 2d of December, anchored in Suez roads. The Indian half of the voyage was over! The whole party of voyagers, about ninety in number, were landed, after about three quarters of an hour uncomfortably spent in boats, upon that yellow, arid shore, to which the great white, staring hotel of Suez seemed to give an appearance of even greater heat and discomfort. The vans were got ready, and in an hour's time Oakfield was going over that wild sandy wilderness as fast as four Arab almost unbroken horses could draw him. On he jogged, in a state of half-sleepy, half-painfully jolted consciousness; no event broke that eighteen hours, except the occasional, noiseless, stealthy thread of the spongy-footed camels, as, in long strings, they glided by in the ghostly darkness, laden with the passengers' luggage and the mail-boxes.

At three o'clock on the morning of the 3d, they reached Grand Cairo, — wonderful city! resting under the shadow of the Pyramids, and all the ages since the Arabian Nights: but, alas for the ignominious truth! Oakfield was fast asleep from the time he reached the Oriental Hotel till he was roused to go down to the steamer upon the Nile. He em-

barked; and having, with the wisdom of an experienced traveller, committed his luggage at Suez, with unquestioning confidence, to the servants of his Highness the Pasha, found it safely placed on board the steamer; while poor Robbins, who had tried to go upon the orthodox principle of never allowing his belongings to go out of his sight, after breaking the hearts of all the infidel pôrters at Suez, and disquieting himself and his companions in the van with the clamorous expression of his fears, now found those fears realized; for the red green-striped carpet-bag was nowhere to be found!

The steam was up, and the little vessel paddled quickly down the fertilizing river. The name of a Liverpool firm, engraved conspicuously over the engine-room, seemed strangely associated with the richly flourishing banks, with the mosques and minarets, the bright costumes and the solid uncouth buildings, which all spoke of the days of Mussulman conquest, of Herodotus's kings, of Isis and Anubis, and of that small family which came down from the land of Canaan, because they heard "that there was corn in Egypt."

They steamed quickly down the Nile, and reached Atfeh and the Mahmoudie canal in the middle of the night, and had to change into the smaller boats there ready. The shouts and cruelty of the Janizaries, as they beat and abused the unhappy work-people, who labored from fear only, made Oakfield glad that this was the last time he would have to witness despotic government. At eleven o'clock, on the morning of the 5th, they reached Alexandria, and were there greeted with the joyful tidings that the Ripon steamer had come in three days previously, and was now lying in the roadstead, waiting for the passengers. It was, indeed, a step homewards to be in the Mediterranean; to set foot on the very vessel which was to take them to England. The captain and the sailors were all equally

anxious to be off; the passengers had certainly no wish to linger; where all are of one mind, work goes on briskly; and that very evening, at six o'clock, the Ripon sailed out of the harbor, on her way to Southampton. The change of hemisphere was now very perceptible; and although in that southern latitude (strange to say, nearly the same parallel as Lahore) even December breezes blew gently, yet at midnight they would draw their blankets over them with a shiver, that gave a foretaste of that acquaintance with an English winter which they soon hoped to renew.

At Malta they anchored, but were prevented by the quarantine regulations from going on shore. Oakfield could only stand and look at the white houses that clustered up the precipitous side of Valetta, overhanging the harbor, and think how he had rambled there five years before with Stanton. A strange coincidence occurred here to divert the monotony of a ship-imprisonment in sight of land. As the passengers were, with the tenacity of true Indians, taking their usual ante-dinner promenade upon their limited "course," — the flush-deck of the Ripon, — they saw a large man-of-war frigate standing slowly out towards the mouth of the harbor, with the homeward-bound pennant streaming almost down to the deck. "What is she? what is she?" was the universal, admiring question. It was with a pleasant shock of surprise that Oakfield heard the answer, "H.M.S. 'Amazon,'" and recollected that she was the ship to which young Walter Vernon belonged, of whose first impressions of sea-life he had read, in his letter to Arthur, when on his sick-bed at Hajeepoor. They were a happy set in that ship; going home to spend Christmas season in England, after three years' service on the Mediterranean station.

The Ripon got to Gibraltar on the 14th of December, and there, for the last time in foreign waters, dropped anchor. The same quarantine regulations were in operation at Gibraltar as at Malta, which perhaps only added to the

general impatience to get the coaling finished, and be off. This business was completed in about six hours, and by sunset they were under weigh again, passing through the straits into the "still vexed" waters of the Bay of Biscay, where the same wind seemed to be raging which Oakfield had left there in 1845. Happily, however, it was now in their favor, as then it had been against them; and although it sent a considerable portion of the passengers — who, in the fair-weather voyaging which it had been their good fortune to enjoy since they left Calcutta, had begun to consider themselves tried mariners — weeping to their beds, those who like Oakfield were not troubled in this way wickedly rejoiced in the stormy breezes, which, if they emptied the interiors of their shipmates, served no less to fill the sails of the ship. So they steamed swiftly on; the ship moving, as the sailors fondly, but irreverently, remarked, "like a jackass with its head turned towards home."

On the night of the 20th of December, about eight o'clock, when the wind, now thoroughly imbued with English cold, had driven everybody below, as Oakfield sat writing a letter, while old gentlemen played their rubber, and young ones mixed their negus, all discussing, however, the approaching termination of their voyage and the different things which they would respectively order for their first dinner in England, — a subject that had been dwelt upon with an unwearying enthusiasm from the day they left Calcutta, — a slight sensation became perceptible at the end of the saloon nearest the hatchway. "What is it? what is it?" "England in sight!" exclaimed a man who had just come down, looking cold and blue, but evidently happy, with the importance of his intelligence; "they have just seen the Lizard lights." In two minutes the saloon was empty; old gentlemen dropped their cards, the young ones their tumblers; all rushed up to see with their own eyes what they had been told of. There it was, — the object that had such at-

traction for them all,— that small red, glimmering light, now hidden beneath the waves, then suddenly, as the ship rose, flashing out again its all-exciting ray. Each time it appeared, there was a little shout; for that was England! The manifestation of a pure, genuine sensation is always imposing, even when we do not share it; but when we ourselves sympathize with it, one of the most softening, exhilarating influences our nature is capable of receiving.

O you grand and soaring and deep-searching philosophers, who sit at home and sneer at the popular cant about patriotism, and pique yourselves upon being citizens of the world, for God's sake go and live ten years in India, that you may return and know the power of that vulgar, commonplace love of country, which every schoolboy has declaimed about, and which you think it below your philosophical dignity to acknowledge. Leave for a day your speculations on the relations of the will and the passions, and the effect of this and that upon the human mind, and go out with a pilot to meet an East Indian home-bound ship, and make your observations there. See that old, gray-headed man, who for forty years there has been adding house to house, and worshipping Mammon, and dying daily to everything ideal and spiritual; and watch the hard lines about his worldly mouth melt into a gracious weakness, as he turns away to hide the strange emotion which, against his will, obtains for the time the mastery over him, as that small candle-beam recalls the forgotten years when he loved man more than money, when he himself was loved by a mother or a sister, with an affection different from that of those who have since loved his rupees, and his appointment, and his dinners. See that youth of five-and-twenty, whose folly, sickness and the shadow of death have not overcome, yet now, though it be but for an instant, sobered into the wisdom of love and tenderness; watch that other, who seeks a secret place that he may weep away the overwhelming pres-

sure of his devout and godly joy; and then cease to deny with your theories and your sneers that which really *is;* cease to speculate upon or question the existence or the wisdom of that which so plainly declares itself by signs, which all the wisdom of the world cannot gainsay nor resist; cease, while talking of divine truth, to blaspheme God, by denying the holiness — nay, the very being — of those feelings of love and unselfish reverence, which are of all things the most certainly His work.

Oakfield was not ashamed to sympathize, to the fullest extent, with the excited throng around him; even upon the youthful ensign, who had babbled all the voyage about the Arab horses he had left in India, and the sensation he would produce upon the turf in England, he could, when he broke out into "Breathes there the man with soul so dead?" &c., look with a friendly countenance. He did not try to analyze his own sensations, to know why or how he was affected; he was content to gaze, with a tearful eye, and feel the tumult of his rushing blood, as his whole soul seemed to be moved within him.

After some half-hour's lighthouse gazing, the cold, cutting wind drove the majority below again. Oakfield went to bed, and woke the next morning, the 21st, with the hope that his rarely sound slumber might be accepted as an earnest of what an English climate was to do for him. He was up at seven o'clock, and dressed and on deck by daybreak.

It was the dawn of an English winter, than which nothing could look more lovely to the eyes of that home-stricken crew. The coast of Dorset was plainly visible through the clear frosty air, — there was England in its very actuality. Men were engaged in getting up the luggage out of the hold, for the captain said that he hoped to pass the Needles at eight, and (the tide favoring them, as the winds and waves had done throughout the voyage) to come to his moorings at Southampton by noon. They breakfasted at

eight, and during that last hasty meal, according to the captain's foretelling, passed the Needles, and felt, in the abated motion of the vessel, the welcome shelter of the Isle of Wight.

Breakfast was soon over ; the speechifying had been disposed of at dinner the night before ; and everybody was on deck, — a motley crowd, dressed in every imaginable shade of costume, from the orthodox broadcloth and black hat, to the full paraphernalia of an Indian white-paper helmet and brown-holland shooting-coat. The excitement of the previous night had subsided ; few men's sentimentalism will stand broad daylight ; and as the prospect of landing and the custom-house became more and more immediate, there appeared on most countenances the shade of that gloom which ever pursues an Englishman in connection with his luggage. And now men have done rushing down into their cabins, to make positively the last preparations, and all walk about the deck somewhat pale with anxiety.

Twelve o'clock ! — the sun stands directly over them, and the Ripon's bells strike eight, as they enter the Southampton water. There lies their goal, visible before them ; the huge steamer rushes on amongst the still increasing multitude of smaller fry, all of whom look with interest upon the " Indian Mail " ; now the houses can be seen, and now the people on the pier, and the word is given, " Ease her ! " a few short splashing revolutions of the monster wheels and they sweep up the harbor ; — " Stop her ! " — the voyage is over, — the great ship floats alongside of the quay ; then all motion entirely ceases, and Oakfield has got back to England !

Then the eighty or ninety passengers, who for the last seven weeks had been living in such intimate relations, melted away with a careless nod, or shake of the hand, into the mutual indifference and ignorance of each other which was

to last for the rest of their lives. Oakfield waited patiently till the custom-house officer shouted for the letter "O," and then his patience was not tried much longer; his trunks were unlocked, the contents hastily tossed over, and he was a free man to go wheresoever he would. He first of all posted his letter; and then hurried off to the railway station, where the three o'clock train to London was on the point of starting. With a wondering consciousness of the gradual ease with which he was relapsing into the old habits of five years ago, he got into a first-class carriage, instinctively took a corner seat with his back to the engine, and put his head out of the window to look for a news-vender. A little boy, with a great tray of newspapers and cheap books slung before him, sees and understands the look.

"*Times*, sir, — *Times*, — *Morning Chronicle*, — *Morning Post*."

"The *Times*, please," said Oakfield, and, as he took in the oblong-folded paper, saw that morning's date upon it, and took a sixpence out of his waistcoat pocket to pay for it, he could almost have sworn that he had never been out of England for a day. The bell rings, — with infinitely less noise than accompanies the uplifting of a single palanquin, — the train, with its cargo of two hundred people, glides slowly off, emerges from the station, and in two minutes is darting through the fields of Hampshire at the rate of five-and-thirty miles an hour.

"Wonderful!" ejaculated Oakfield, as he leaned back and turned to the leading article. There were two middle-aged men in the same carriage, whose conversation unmistakably pronounced them to be inhabitants of "the city."

"The heavy portion of the Indian Mail came in this morning," observed one of them.

"Yes; so I heard," replied the other, "by the Ripon; very little in it; Indian securities just the same; Lord Dalhousie going to Peshawur, it appears."

"Peshawur; where is that?"

"One of the great towns recently taken in the Punjab; one of the largest military stations, my young nephew tells me, in India."

"Ah!" said the other, "I dare say. What a pity it is, that they always will post their troops in those big towns, exposing the poor young lads to all its temptations and luxuries! If I had my way, I'd send them all to out-of-the-way places, where they would n't have the opportunity to get into debt. I hear people talk about the banks; I say I know better; I know what it is runs away with youngsters' money. It is n't the banks, bless you! it 's your theatre-going every night of the week, and your tavern supper-parties afterwards, and your skylarking, and what not!"

"But you don't mean," interrupted his companion, "that they have theatres and taverns, and all that sort of thing, in those outlandish parts?"

"Don't I?" rejoined the other, with a knowing shake of the head, — "I do though. What I say is, that wherever Englishmen go, they take these things with them. Look at the number of Queen's regiments out there; — you don't suppose that they will be content to go without their little amusements? Why, there 's Calcutta, I 'm told, just like a second London!"

"Indeed!" said the other, with credulous surprise; "well, I should n't have thought it; my young nephew must be a quiet youngster, for he never seems to see any of this gayety."

"Trust him for seeing it," rejoined the knowing one; "does n't like to tell 'old nunks in the city' of it; keeps it all snug. Ah! I know what young men are; find it all out some day when he sends his bills home, — eh? Where is he? — Bengal Presidency?"

"Yes, — Bengal I believe it is; he was stationed at Poonah, I think, or some such place, when last I heard of him."

Oakfield could not trust himself to listen any longer; he

held up the paper, as it was, to conceal his laughter. "And these are the kind of people," he thought, "who take, we are assured, such a glowing interest in India and the Indian Army? Well, we ought n't to wonder, when the *Times* takes the lead, by talking of 'the seductions of the luxurious towns of India,' — Heaven save the mark! I should like to see the man who wrote that, sitting in a tent at Peshawur in the month of May, with a dust-storm blowing, and half a dozen Khybereeş prowling about in the distance with an eye to his horse."

With which charitable reflection he turned to let down the window, and put his head out to look at Winchester, to which station the train was now slowly approaching. There were the old towers of the Cathedral, and there "the Hills," looking, as he so often remembered to have seen them, bleak and chill in the cold gray dimness of a December afternoon. "The holidays, I suppose," he thought to himself, "or I would certainly stop and take a look at the old place."

The train moved on, and Oakfield fell asleep. When he awoke it was quite dark; he had been dreaming of Ferozepore, and started up, hearing nothing but the dull rumble of the train, seeing nothing but the yellow gleam of the carriage lamp overhead, wondering where he was; then the joyful remembrance of his position came pleasantly over him. Finding that he had the carriage now to himself, he put the window down and looked out. What home association there was in the blast of cold, fiercely rushing air that met him, as he gazed out into the darkness!

Still the train dashed on; the blood-red cinders from time to time flying past the carriage from the engine, the piercing scream of which now and then breaks the stillness of the winter night with some salutary signal. Presently Oakfield looked out again, and saw lights on the horizon; momentarily they brighten and increase, and he looks down from the embankment, which they are crossing, upon the suburbs of

London. Still they rush on, and the huge London itself is before them. The Nine Elms station, which had been the terminus when Oakfield left England, is passed, and the train is winding quickly on among the very streets of the metropolis. The speed slackens; the unearthly creaking of the brakes is heard; suddenly the darkness is forsaken for light fiercer than the noon-day sun, as, with a clash and a swing and a rattle, the train draws its snaky length through the gas-lighted, iron-roofed station, and then — stops.

The doors are all flung open, almost simultaneously; porters walk briskly along from carriage to carriage; and in an instant the passengers are all disgorged upon the platform. Oakfield, half smiling as he feels the anxious frown of a luggage-seeker knitting itself upon his forehead, walks up to the van behind the engine. He sees, claims, and appropriates his well-travelled trunks, and desires a porter to call a cab. His luggage is hoisted up; he steps inside; recognizes, almost with pleasure, the well-known damp-strawey odor so peculiar to a London cab, and inimitable *tout ensemble* of a London cabman, as he shows his red face at the window, to ask, "Where to, sir!" "Euston Hotel"; and they rattled off over the loud pavement; sink into silence upon the macadamized road across Waterloo Bridge, — from which Oakfield looks down upon the broad, steaming river; are lost for a time in the tangled wilderness of the Strand; improve their pace up Regent Street, where Oakfield looks, with a child's marvel, at the shop-windows, and thinks of "the luxurious towns" of India; and finally, after sundry twists and turns, pull up before the well-remembered door of the Euston.*

* The author hopes that the detail of this description may be excused, as, however tedious or frivolous it may appear to the English reader, he trusts it may not be without interest to some exiles in India, for whom such details have an attraction only exiles can comprehend.

Oakfield was determined not to commence his English life by a struggle with a cabman, so, having dismissed that functionary with a remuneration which even he had not the conscience to murmur at, he entered the large and magnificent coffee-room. He sees the blazing fires in the spacious grates; the bright mahogany tables, whereat people, either singly or in parties of two and three, are indulging in the luxurious privacy of a quiet dinner; sees the tables in the centre of the room piled with papers and periodicals; casts a glance at the magnificent proportions of the room, and then remembered that a "dâk bungalow" is an Indian "*hotel*"!

There was a party of four very young men dining at the next table. By the ludicrous profusion which covered their table, and the rapid succession and intermixture of wines of every climate and country, Oakfield would have known them for Oxford undergraduates, even if they had not proclaimed themselves so to be by their unwearying flow of "shop," and incessant repetition of the word "men." Looking at them, he could with difficulty believe that only five years ago he himself had been, by position at least, such an one.

His dinner soon made its appearance, and he seemed to dispose of it rather with the appetite of a traveller than that of an invalid. Indeed, he was throughout borne up by an excitement which might easily be mistaken for health.

He was up and at breakfast by nine o'clock the next morning, and then walked over to the station, where the ten o'clock train to the North was on the point of starting. It would be painting the lily to describe the scene at the station, after the inimitable sketches given by Sir Francis Head, in "Stokers and Pokers." Oakfield did not feel up to doing the whole distance in one day, so booked his place only to Lancaster. As the train rushed on through the hours of the day, and the counties of England, the morning lightly gleamed over the cheerful woodlands of Hertford-

shire; the noon-day sun glared down, with its short, frosty heat, upon the sloping pastures of Warwickshire and Leicestershire; the sober tints of a winter afternoon were shed with soothing harmony upon the warm brown moors of Staffordshire; and night was falling as the train crossed the glimmering Mersey at Warrington, and hastened on among the unceasing fires of the manufacturing North.

He started again by the railway at half past six the next day. It was the 23d of December, a clear, cloudless, frosty morning; and it would not have required the home interest to give delight to that morning's drive through the tinkling woods, — white with hoar-frost, green and red with the Christmas holly, — that every now and then disclosed through their opening the joyous waters of Windermere, as, blue and life-like, they rippled to the shore. They passed on to Grasmere, where, under the shadow of that white church-tower, beneath the yew-trees which his own hands had planted, Wordsworth lay asleep, — Wordsworth, the greatest Englishman of his age; known to the world as a master of English poetry, but known also in these valleys as the good, sympathizing neighbor, the true, simple-minded friend, the noble, venerable man. "There he lies," thought Oakfield; "and surely it would be treason to humanity to associate one thought of sadness, or anything but quiet joy, with his death."

And now they are ascending Dunmail Raise; the heap of stones — the silent witnesses of the crisis of Oakfield's destiny — is passed; he is in Cumberland, — his own county; he sees with his eyes that lake and those woods and hills, which he has seen so often in fancy, or in the visions of the night, during the last five years; the descent is commenced, and in less than half an hour his journey will be over. And now let us leave him there, on Dunmail Raise, while we see with what feelings his coming was waited for at home.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace;
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul;
While the stars burn, the moons increase,
And the great ages onward roll.

"Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet:
Nothing comes to thee new or strange;
Sleep full of rest from head to feet;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change."

TENNYSON.

THE Oakfield family were still unaware, when Wykham and Margaret became engaged, of the change which had taken place in the former's fortunes. It was with happy hearts therefore that they heard Margaret was not to be entirely lost to them; that she was at least to remain in England. Of course Wykham postponed his departure for some time longer than he had intended; but in the beginning of May he returned to London. Before leaving Cumberland, he wished to have a day fixed for the wedding: it was ultimately agreed, however, to wait till they could hear from Edward, and think of him as being cognizant of what was passing.

In July, Fred returned to Leatheburn, in time to receive a most affectionate greeting, as a brother, from Edward: but now there was another reason for putting off the marriage, and this was the very unsatisfactory account of the latter's health. Mail after mail was eagerly looked for, and

at last, after much anxiety, as successive fortnights brought a worse and yet a worse report, they heard with inexpressible satisfaction that he was coming home. Fred himself could not but assent to the propriety of now waiting for the presence of the head of the family, and won the admiration of all by the cheerfulness with which he bore these repeated disappointments.

Autumn came and went; and even Wykham could hardly regret this prolongation of his days of courtship. Golden days they were, in those glorious autumn months, when the valley blazed with the crimson splendor of the decaying cherry-trees, and the burnished brown of the oaks wonderfully commingled with the deep blue-green of the fern forests. Autumn passed away and winter came; the rich colors faded from the trees, giving place to the beauty of the glistening birch-twigs and the glowing evergreens. The snow came and covered the earth, as it had done five years before, when Edward Oakfield had left home for India, and was lying thick when the post arrived, on the 19th of December, bringing the Marseilles letter announcing his own immediate arrival.

The 23d of December arrived, and with it the meeting so long and anxiously expected. What that meeting was we will not attempt to describe; how the weary wanderer, so long distressed both in body and mind, found himself at last in the haven where he would be. It was one of those days not to be forgotten in a lifetime; nor was the happiness disturbed so much as might have been expected by the thought of Oakfield's illness, for the flush of animation was easily mistaken by sanguine observers for the sign of returning health. But in a few days the excitement on which he had been living for some days began to fade, and the reaction did not fail to impress its mark upon the sunken eye and the wasted cheek. His mother saw these symptoms

with uneasiness; and, as they continued and grew worse, with alarm. A touching incident first brought home to her the fact that Edward himself regarded his illness as being very serious.

On Christmas eve, while all were gathered round the cheerful fire, listening ("who but listened?") to the serenade which, according to old kindly Northern custom, greets every family on this night, Edward began to repeat Wordsworth's beautiful dedicatory lines to the Sonnets on the River Duddon, describing this identical custom. All listened with a subdued pleasure to the soft musical stanzas, so well suited to the sober cheerfulness of a winter's night; but when he came to the lines,

> "The mutual nod, the grave disguise
> Of hearts with gladness brimming o'er,
> And some unbidden tears that rise
> For names once heard, but heard no more,"

his voice faltered, and the emotion of his hearers was exchanged for one of a different nature.

Indeed, erelong it became obvious to all that poor Edward had been sent home not before his constitution had been shattered, and that he had now little or no strength to resist the influence of an English winter, nor yet to flee from it. A cloud, not of gloom, but of seriousness, brooded over the whole family. The marriage of Wykham and Margaret seemed again indefinitely postponed by mutual consent. Edward himself never spoke of his illness as dangerous; perhaps indeed he himself knew less than others how ill he was, though occasional intimations of how seriously his case was regarded could not fail to reach him from time to time. One afternoon early in January, one of those mild sunny, interloping days which sometimes come to remind us of spring and summer in the depth of winter, Oakfield was driving Margaret in a pony carriage, — now his only means of get-

ting about, — along the road so often referred to in these pages, towards Dunmail Raise. At the foot of the pass the pony, unwilling to go beyond this his usual turning-place, came to a halt.

"The pony thinks you will be tired if you go further," said Margaret; "he is right, is he not?"

"No, not to-day: I feel better than I have done for a long time; and I cannot afford to lose those sun-gleams just yet: so, Come up!" and with this exhortation he broke the force of the pony's associations with the whip, and on they went slowly up the hill.

"Margaret, what is the day of the month?"

"The 7th of January. Why do you ask?"

"How very strange!" said Oakfield, leaning back in the carriage and looking about him with a musing eye; "how very strange, Margaret! it is just six years to-day, then, since I had that long conversation with you about going to India, in this very place, going up this hill. I was thinking how exactly the same everything looks now as it did then: how you, dearest, are looking so unchanged; and so, for that matter, do I, perhaps; but I feel changed enough, Margaret. Do you recollect the day?"

"Perfectly."

They drove on without speaking for some time. Margaret's heart was full of the memory of that day, and all which it suggested. At length she said, —

"It has been a happy change, Edward, which those six years have worked for you."

"Has it?" he replied mournfully. "God knows. When I said I felt different, I thought, I believe, of outward rather than inward changes. I seem to myself more experienced; older by a hundred years; and yet — and yet — Margaret! do you recollect asking me why I went to India?"

His sister nodded.

"Well, that question has recurred to me a thousand times: it recurs still, for 'all my mind is clouded with a doubt'; it is a sad thing to have battled for six years, Margaret, and seem at the end to be no nearer to a clear perception."

Margaret laid her hand upon her brother's arm: "Edward, dearest, you must not torment yourself needlessly; you know that none of us would presume to flatter you, but we know that during these six years you have been earnestly trying to do your duty; and I am sure that God acknowledges such as seekers of truth, and will, in his own time, send them such light as they need."

"You speak comfortably, my sister, and, I hope and believe, truly. Do not misunderstand me. I do not despair, nor at all feel that God has forsaken me: in my illness I find him continually near me; and should my illness end as I sometimes think it will, I believe I could still find him very near. But, Margaret, he is a God of the living; and when I look forward and ask, 'How am I to serve him in active life?' I again feel all at sea; for I feel no confidence that my work in India was such a service. The fact is, life seems to me to be getting more and more perplexed and wonderful every day, and I do not at all find in myself the strength that shall take hold of any one of its clews and follow it out to the end of the mystery. The combination of worldly activity and godliness seems becoming more and more impossible; the worldly to be living more entirely to and for the world; the godly to be more and more going out of it. I often think that the latter would be a wise and no unselfish course for me; that in these days, when so many are ready to push forward and supply all vacancies that may occur in the busy, conspicuous posts, his is a true wisdom who keeps apart, and listens, and observes, and thinks, and, when he finds a season, speaks a rare word or two. That,

in short, the literary man, not meaning thereby anything at all connected with the penny-a-liner, is about the best off of all others. 'Serve God by action,' it is said, but then I find all courses of action so clogged and blocked up with meanness, and worldliness, and Mammon, that the service of God is well-nigh choked out of them. Well, then patience is recommended. 'Wait,' it is said, 'and cast bread upon the waters; and sow, not desiring yourself to reap; and believe that these active courses shall be, by degrees, purified, and God will be continually drawing more and more good out of the evil which now offends you: do not expect to see perfection, but be content to take the good with the bad.' Well, this is a hard saying, though I suppose there is much truth in it; the only thing I complain of in it is, that this said contentment is so tempting; it is so easy to be content to take the good with the bad; and then it is so easy to go a step further, and be content with the bad. Why should I expose myself to this temptation? Why should I not seek for the good, where I can get it without the bad, in the ideal world? Why should not I strive to dwell there where there are so many thousands willing and more able to fill my place in the actual world? Why should I be battling and painfully discriminating between good and evil; finding, with much disgust, a grain of truth for a bushel of falsehood, if, by giving myself up to the pure words of great men, I may be growing continually to a higher standard of unmixed truth?"

"Because," said Margaret, "God does not will that you should have peace in the world. How would the world go on, how would God's service be advanced in it, if all good men were to retire from it in disgust?"

"You are always to the point, Margaret, which is one of the very many reasons that I so like talking with you. God does not will, you say, that we should have peace in the

world. I doubt that, — only I think that we, with our slavish fears, shrink from peace as from every other good thing: none of us take as freely as God gives. We fidget and bustle, and plunge into painful turmoil, and then babble about peace not being our lot on earth, when in truth we have never looked for it. If all the good men, you say, were to leave the world, what would become of it? But what do you mean by leaving the world? Nothing but leaving the evil of the world, so that there should be a marked division between the good and evil, — a consummation greatly to be desired, only, in the present state of things, impossible. All the good men never *will* leave the world, so your hypothesis cannot be allowed: or if they did, so much the better, in which case it tells against your objection. Besides, Margaret, I cannot undertake to say what other men might, or could, or should do; I must consider, in the first place, what I may and ought to do; the question for me is, 'May I give myself up to peace,' that is, practically, to thinking, and reading, and writing, as the main employment of my life? or shall I again seek a more busy life, and going on patiently, sowing and not hoping to reap, taking a bushel of falsehood for a grain of truth, casting my bread upon the waters, resume my work in India? Oh!" he exclaimed suddenly, "I cannot do it."

Margaret looked at him tenderly; in his pale, haggard face, from which, in his excitement, the false bloom had quite faded away, she seemed to read an anxious longing for the peace of which he spoke, which it would be vain and cruel to controvert. The tears stood in her eyes, as, taking her brother's hand, and following more her own thoughts than what he had been saying, she exclaimed, —

"Dear, dear Edward!"

He started.

"Margaret," he asked in a low tone, very different from that which he had formerly used, "what do you mean?"

"What should I mean?" she answered smiling; "you are not surprised, I hope, at my calling you dear Edward; for if you are, you will have to be shocked again: dear, dear Edward, can you bear it?"

"You meant more than that, Margaret: come, tell me, darling: you must not treat me like a child: did you not think I looked very ill when you said that?"

She bowed her head and pressed his hand by way of answer.

"And you were thinking that I need not disquiet myself about returning to India, when I am likely, erelong, to be lying in the churchyard? Speak, Margaret; believe me, there is nothing shocking to me in this; it is not *that* which I shrink from; I have sometimes suspected that myself,—often indeed; but do others think I shall die, Margaret?"

He looked anxiously in her face with the awful curiosity which all, the best or the more despairing, must ever feel, while they wait the answer to this fearful question. Margaret had neither the power nor the will to deceive him.

"We know little, dearest, but we sometimes are very sad about you; not *for* you, my own brother, for it would bring you peace."

It was long before Oakfield could reply.

"How wonderfully my mother bears it!" were his first words; "I fancied she had no idea how ill I was: it is strange," he added, "to be talking of one's own death. Here we are at the top; on those stones, Margaret, I revolved the early acts of the drama of my life, and now at this place we are contemplating the last; and you my faithful confidante in all. A solemn studio this place has been to me, and now I think this is the last time that I shall ever see it; it must be your inheritance, my sister."

Poor Margaret could not answer, for the tears would no longer be repressed, and she rested her head upon her brother's shoulder and sobbed for grief, like a child. He tenderly

kissed her, and, turning, they drove slowly homewards. That evening the Christmas games were played as usual, but Edward could not but think from time to time of his conversation with Margaret, as he looked up and wondered painfully whether any change could weaken or destroy that communion which so held them all together. "If it could," he thought, "death would be horrible; but if death be horrible, God's promises have failed. Therefore I believe in the Communion of Saints."

The days passed on uneventfully enough. The Indian Mail brought Oakfield a long letter from Mr. Middleton full of Indian intelligence, and expatiating on it with that energy, strong sense, and single-eyed honesty, which distinguished the writer. Strangely, indeed, did the vigor and the decision of Mr. Middleton contrast with the doubts and perplexities in which Oakfield had confessed himself to Margaret to be still involved. By years of energetic labor, Mr. Middleton had clearly opened for himself that path of useful activity along which he was now pursuing his clear and prosperous course. It was as one who had overcome the difficulties of life, speaking to one who was even now dying in the struggle. Undoubtedly Oakfield was in the way himself to overcome likewise, and had there been more time before him, he might not have despaired of doing so; but as it was, he felt that it was too late. He read the letter with a mournful sense of regret, perhaps of self-reproach; then, with a smile full of sorrowful meaning, handed it to Margaret. It was evident that he had deliberately turned away from the world.

The days passed away, and with them the mild weather, and the iron frost again bound the earth. One sunny morning, Edward had gone with the rest of the party to the lake, which was completely frozen over. A sudden storm of sleet came on, with an icy, driving wind; they all went home as fast as they could, but before they reached the house,

Oakfield's tearing cough and difficult breathing indicated too surely that the mischief was done. He was put to bed, and there he remained for some days. At the end of the month the weather again grew milder, and he was able once more to come into the drawing-room. But it was fearful to observe the ravages which the last attack had made in his face and frame. He was brought down stairs into the drawing-room on the afternoon of the 31st of January, and laid upon a sofa. Margaret read aloud to him; he spoke from time to time, but in a voice hardly above a whisper. Presently the door was thrown open, and Rose ran in, calling out, "Mamma, mamma! I've found a snowdrop."

It was the first of the year, and she held her prize in her hand. When she saw her brother, however, she dropped it, and ran up to kiss him.

"Thank you, Rose," said Edward, in a voice so low as almost to frighten the little girl; "thank you for bringing the snowdrop; will you give it me?"

Rose brought it and gave it to him, crying, she did not know why.

"I did not think I should see any snowdrops this year, Rose, but you see you have brought me one. Herby, old fellow, I wish you would wheel the sofa to the window."

Herby did so, with Wykham's assistance, — in silence, for all kept looking at Edward as if there was something unusual in his countenance. Mrs. Oakfield had observed a change, as she thought, and had gone out of the room to send for the doctor. Edward, not perceiving her absence, said, when the sofa arrangement by the window was completed, —

"Mother."

"She is gone out of the room," said Margaret; "she will be back directly."

"Call her, please."

At a sign Mary ran off to do so. Mrs. Oakfield came back in trembling haste, but grew composed as she approached her son: he lay with his face towards the window, pale and peaceful, with his eyes hardly open.

"Mother!" he exclaimed, faintly.

Nobody spoke. Mrs. Oakfield bent over his face, and bathed it with her tears.

"Mother! I am going to my father, whom I have loved since you first taught me of him."

Presently, turning to Rose, he said, "Rose, my pet, where is the snowdrop?"

It was in his unconscious hand; the little girl took it, and, with a wail of grief and terror, held it before him.

"Gently, Rose, gently; where is Mary? Bless you both, darlings. Herby, my own brother; you brought me here to take my last look at God's earth. Stay at home, Herby, — they must not lose us both."

Another pause. What awe is equal to that of those silent pauses round a death-bed? Presently he resumed in a voice fainter than before, and with longer interruptions from his painful breathing. "Fred, give my love to Stanton, and to Middleton: Margaret!" he then said, in a tone so loud as to almost startle all who heard him, "my friend, my sister, Margaret! He is very near; He is here now, a Father to us all."

His mother, who had hitherto sat clasping his hands in speechless sorrow, again knelt by his side, and again embraced him in an agony of love.

"Mother!" he gently murmured, and his eyes closed, and the gasps came at long intervals; then succeeded but one word, the last word of that young warrior, a word which his countenance, as it settled into the sleep of death, confirmed; that word was "Peace": — saying which he passed away.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"The ring is on;
The 'wilt thou' answered, and again
The 'wilt thou' asked, till out of twain
Her sweet 'I will' has made ye one."

TENNYSON.

ALTHOUGH Oakfield had been ill so long, yet his death came upon his family as a sudden calamity. Indeed the end had been sudden, and throughout they had regarded him more as a confirmed invalid than as one likely soon to die. His friends in India, more accustomed to such a result of a long illness, the seeds of which had been sown in that climate, were less startled, perhaps, but hardly less grieved. With the following letter from Stanton, containing an expression of their grief, we shall close the Indian part of our story.

"Benares, March 20th, 1851.

"MY DEAR WYKHAM:—

"I have just seen the Overland Mail of the 7th of February with the intelligence of Oakfield's death. As you are now so closely connected with his family, I will venture to ask you to assure them how deeply he is mourned by his friends out here. I had been thinking very much of him in the last few days. Three days ago, in my passage up the river, I stopped at Hajeepoor for a few hours; I went to the house in which he used to live, and visited the grave of the poor young boy, Vernon, whom he nursed and watched so faithfully. You can imagine how these places and associations recalled him to my mind. I thought of him as he was

then, and as I had known him since, little thinking that he who so occupied my thoughts was even then in his grave. Not that it has surprised me to hear of his death. When I parted with him at Ferozepore, last year, I never expected to see him again. I shall not weary you with all the thoughts that crowd upon me as I recall the days of my acquaintance with him. Though a good deal younger than myself, and though I believe I exercised considerable influence over him, yet I can truly say that I always looked up to him; not only for his good, self-denying life, but also because I always felt impressed by the sadness which never, I think, quite deserted him. Had he lived longer, I believe he would have outgrown the doubts and suspicions of himself, which so clouded his mind: his anxious and too speculative nature would have derived strength and health from the invigorating influence of active employment, he would have held with fruitful strength the truth which he spent his life in dimly striving after. As it is, he has died in the struggle, and found by a shorter road a more perfect deliverance. He was, I have long felt, the great tie that held me to this country, and now I begin to think seriously of emigrating with my wife and child. They are now just gone to England with Middleton; my wife had been ill for some time, so I took this opportunity of sending her home. I only wish that I could have gone too. I went down with them to Calcutta, and am now returning to Ferozepore, feeling more solitary than I have ever done since the days of my griffinage. You know I never liked India, but one always takes a sort of stoical pleasure in doing a very unpleasant duty. You may imagine what zest stable duty may acquire by being regarded as a chronic martyrdom!

"Middleton will be deeply disappointed at losing that meeting with Oakfield to which he had so long looked forward. I do not think he will return to India; he has money enough to stay at home, and will, probably, by publishing or otherwise, try to carry on his Indian labors there. If he does leave the service, it will be an additional inducement to me to quit India, so do not be surprised if you next hear of me and my wife as denizens of the bush. The fates of us three have diverged considerably since that night when you first met Oakfield at our mess at Meerut. The world, my dear Fred, would say that you had been the fortunate man of the trio.

do not exactly know about that; but I am sure that your marriage is a matter for the most sincere congratulation; I am not so certain about the thousand a year. I trust it will not induce you to give up all work and hang about the world as an idle rascal for the rest of your days. I believe you are just the man to like such a life; but you have no more *right* to be idle on a thousand than on a hundred or on ten pounds a year. I do hope you will enter some profession; you are not yet quite too old, though you very soon will be. Give my compliments to your wife, if you are married when this reaches you. I love her for her name's sake, and also, my dear Fred, for yours. I am writing this on board the steamer, and shall send it up to the station post-office by a coolie. We shall be off again in less than an hour for Allahabad. So now I set my face towards Ferozepore, in which amiable place I suppose I shall be when this letter reaches you, just becoming used to hot weather and dust-storms. Good by, dear Fred; my heart is very full, a reason perhaps for being silent rather than for expatiating at greater length.

"Believe me, ever yours,

"H. STANTON."

And now once more, and for the last time, we return to Leatheburn. It is the middle of June, the anniversary of Edward Oakfield's birth, which has been fixed for the marriage of Wykham and Margaret. The beauty is that of a summer's day among the mountains. Upon the side of Helvellyn, "the solemn wastes of heathy hill" lie sleeping in the sunshine; the whole outline of the range that bounds the valley is reflected in the glassy waters of the lake, the sun glares down with a power rarely felt in English latitudes, with a power that might be oppressive, were it not for the shade of the birch and sycamore trees which stud the valley, and the cooling ripple of the streams; tourists on foot, tourists on horseback, tourists in gigs, are panting along the high road, enjoying, to the utmost, that consummation of tourist bliss so seldom granted,—a fine day; all living nature speaks aloud of happiness, but nowhere is there greater joy, placid and

silent though it be, than in that gray house, almost hidden in the luxuriant creepers, where they are preparing to celebrate the birthday of the dead and the marriage of the living.

The celebration is to be gravely cheerful, as befits his memory to whom the day is sacred. Only two carriages are at the door, which are shortly filled, the first by Mrs. Oakfield, Margaret, and her two bridesmaids, Rose and Mary; the second, by Wykham, his father, Herby, and Mr. Middleton, who alone had been asked to come down from London and attend the wedding.

Herby had tried hard, but in vain, to induce Wykham to astonish the rustics of the valley by appearing in all the magnificence of Bengal Light Cavalry full-dress uniform, and himself made up for any deficiencies with the gorgeous costume of an Oxford Freshman. They drove along the well-remembered grass-grown road, by the lake-side, sheltered by the deep woods from the rays of the midday sun, and entered the little church, which, cool, ancient, and kindly-looking, with its little stone arches and pillars, was now full of people, not listless gossipers, nor gaping starers, but kind, sympathizing, friendly neighbors, who had known the family before either Wykham or Margaret were born, and who, only five months before, had followed Edward Oakfield's body to the grave. The young clergyman who officiated was orthodox, and read the whole service right through in a strictly orthodox manner; but orthodoxy itself could not make dull that solemn ceremony, when those two, in the presence of God and their friends and neighbors, plighted to each other their faith in the name of God, and promised to be one in flesh and in spirit till death did them part. At last the service is over down to the very last word, "amazement," and they pass out into the churchyard. When they reached the little white gate leading into the road, Wykham

stood still, and, pressing his wife's arm, pointed to two graves that were close beside them, under the boughs of the old yew-tree, which flung its shade over one half of that little burying-ground. They were the grass-grown graves of the two Edward Oakfields, father and son, with the name, age, and date of death inscribed on a stone at the head of each. Margaret perceived and accepted her husband's meaning, and as they had already made their vows publicly in the presence of God and the living, so now they silently renewed them in the no less real and awful presence of God and the dead. Breakfast was waiting for them at the house, to which they sat down, a family party, with the single addition of Mr. Middleton.

It was a day of shower and sunshine, of tears and laughter, of most intense feeling both of regret and hope, the two springs that move human hearts. When Fred went up to Rose with a grave face, and said he was going to kiss her, and Rose with equal gravity refused to be kissed, then the laughter carried it; but when Fred and Margaret had fairly started on their road to Scotland, then for a few minutes the tears had it all their own way; and poor Rose and Mary cried as if their hearts would break, nor could their mother find it in her heart to stop them: "And yet, Herby, my boy," she said, as she took her son to her arms, "I believe it is in every way a most happy day for her and for us."

Reader, we believe so too; and with this pleasing confidence we must conclude. Wykham has followed Mr. Middleton's advice, and matriculated as a gentleman commoner at a small college at Oxford, and is now residing as a married man at that University, looking forward to going to the bar. We hear that at a recent debate on Indian affairs at the "Union," he astonished "the house" with a few personal recollections of Mooltan. Herby is also residing at

Christ Church, and as he never has anything to say to the highest authorities of that place, nor they to him, is probably doing well there. The Vernons still pay periodical visits to Leatheburn. Walter Vernon was of the party on the last occasion, a fine young midshipman. If he and Rose are as fond of each other a few years hence as they seem to be now, there is likely to be another wedding in the Oakfield family. Mr. Middleton has not returned to India, nor is it likely that he will; but his sister has rejoined her husband, and is perhaps by this time on her way with him to the Canterbury Settlement. So "Young India," or the "Ferozepore School," is quite broken up, without, it must be confessed, leaving the slightest trace of existence behind. Yet some say that no brave man fights and dies in vain; that the fact that there was one who, in the days of his youth, desired and earnestly endeavoured to be a devout, thoughtful, sensible soldier cannot become as though it had never been; in short, that there was or will be a fruit, not only for himself but for others, from that anxious life-conflict which was borne by him, who the while is peacefully sleeping under the old yew-tree in Leatheburn churchyard.

THE END.

Boston, 135 Washington Street,
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